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ABSTRACT

A project examined the outcomes and pathways of 1992 participants in adult and community education (ACE) courses in Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia. It explored participant characteristics, vocational skills gained from completing ACE courses, educational and employment outcomes, and personal benefits and benefits to families and the community. Ten discussion groups were held, with 5-10 participants attending each group. For the survey, a stratified random sample of ACE centers selected a representative sample of participants; 2,388 questionnaires were used in the analysis. Participants most frequently reported improvements to language and communication skills. Disadvantaged students improved their skills the most. A high proportion of students in adult basic education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) went on to study more ESL and/or ABE subjects. Unemployed students experienced more educational outcomes and pathways than other participants. In terms of employment pathways, 43 percent of those who were unemployed at the time of the 1992 course were working when they filled out the questionnaire. The most significant outcomes were those related to personal benefits, particularly for women; 50 percent reported they gained at least one family outcome from their 1992 course and 15 percent of ACE participants reported becoming involved in voluntary work in the community. (Appendixes include additional data tables, instruments, and 26-item bibliography.) (YLB)

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by the Australian Bureau of Statistics

Adult, Community and Further Education Board, Victoria.

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FOREWORD

The Victorian Adult, Community and Further Education Board carried out this research project in conjunction with its adult education colleagues in New South Wales and South Australia. Funds were provided for the project by the Commonwealth Government, through DEET and then ANTA, as a consequence of recommendations contained in the report "Come in Cinderella" prepared by the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training in 1991.

The results of this project clearly indicate the important role adult community education plays in the development of a life long learning environment. The survey results suggest that adult community education develops human resources by providing opportunities for people to gain skills, improve their employment or further education opportunities and participate more fully in cultural, civic and social activities thus contributing to the Nation's wellbeing.

The publication of this report will ensure broad public access to this significant document and will also provide the basis for further research and development in this important area.

The Board welcomes comments or suggestions on any aspect of this report.

David Neilson
Chairperson
Adult Community and Further Education Board
Victoria

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AACE:	Australian Association of Adult and Community Education
ABS:	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACE:	Adult and Community Education
ACE Unit:	Adult and Community Education Unit (SA)
ACFEB:	Adult and Community Further Education Board (Vic.)
ANTA:	Australian National Training Authority
BACE:	Board of Adult and Community Education (NSW)
CAE:	Council of Adult Education
CES:	Commonwealth Employment Service
ESL:	English as a Second Language
HSC:	Higher School Certificate
NESB:	Non-English speaking background
SACE:	South Australian Certificate of Education
SEIFA:	Socio-Economic Indexes For Areas
SSCEET:	Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training
TAFE:	Technical And Further Education
VCE:	Victorian Certificate of Education
WEA:	Worker's Educational Association

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFEB) in Victoria received funding from the Department of Employment, Education and Training for a national project examining the outcomes and pathways of people attending adult and community education courses.

The main objectives of the project were to explore:

- the characteristics of people participating in Adult and Community Education (ACE); for example, their age, sex and labour force status.

- what vocational skills participants gained from completing ACE courses.

- the educational and employment outcomes from 1992 ACE courses. For example, whether students felt that these courses assisted them to go on to further study or to get a job. Additionally, to explore the pathways of participants; that is, whether they actually went on to do further study or to get a job.

- the personal benefits achieved from completing ACE courses, and benefits to families and the community.

The course types that were covered in this study were Adult Basic Education (reading, writing, maths and numeracy), English as a Second Language (ESL), Access (eg. secondary school certificates and preparation for further study), General Adult Education (eg. arts and crafts, personal development) and Vocational Education (eg. learning job related skills).

METHODOLOGY

The project involved two methods of data collection: discussion (or focus) groups and a sample survey using a questionnaire. 1992 participants in adult and community education courses in Victoria, NSW and South Australia were included in the study.

Ten discussion groups were held, with between five and ten participants attending each group. These groups were an excellent means of finding out about participants' experiences of adult and community education, in their own words.

For the survey, a stratified random sample of ACE centres was chosen, then centres were instructed to select a representative sample of their 1992 participants. After sorting out questionnaires that were out of scope, 2,388 questionnaires were used in the analysis. The questionnaire enabled outcomes and pathways to be analysed in terms of participants' characteristics.

MAIN FINDINGS

Profile of 1992 course participants

79 per cent of respondents to the questionnaire were female, and those aged between 35 and 54 years were represented in greater numbers compared to the Australian population as a whole.

The greatest proportion of respondents were enrolled in General Adult Education courses (55 per cent) followed by Vocational Education (19 per cent). A greater proportion of male participants were enrolled in Vocational Education, Adult Basic Education and ESL courses, while female participants were much more likely to be enrolled in General Adult Education courses.

Overall, participants in ACE were more highly qualified than the Australian population. However, two thirds of people enrolled in ESL classes and half of Adult Basic Education students had not progressed beyond year 10. Also, there was a greater proportion of respondents who were unemployed or not in the labour force compared to the Australian population.

There was a greater proportion of respondents who were sole parents (7 per cent) compared to the Australian population. The proportion of participants speaking languages other than English at home was comparable to the proportion in the population.

Improvement in skills

The questionnaire asked 1992 ACE participants if they believed they had improved their vocational skills in eight particular areas. These areas were based on the seven key competencies outlined in the 1992 Mayer report which states that it is vital for employees to develop these key competencies if they are to function effectively in today's workforce.

Of the key competencies, improvements to language and communication skills were the most frequently reported, with a quarter of respondents reporting they improved in this area. This was followed by learning how to better collect, organise or use information (19 per cent) and learning to work better with people (19 per cent).

Disadvantaged students, such as people who have never worked, those without post-school qualifications and sole parents generally improved their skills the most. Particularly notable were the improvements experienced by unemployed people. A higher proportion of unemployed students reported improvements to at least one key competency skill (78 per cent), compared to those who were employed (55 per cent) or not in the labour force (59 per cent).

A high proportion of participants of non-English speaking background (NESB) reported improvements to their language and communication skills. However, a lower proportion of NESB participants said they learnt to use technology better, compared to those participants speaking English only, reflecting the small proportion of NESB participants who do Vocational Education courses.

The improvements to skills that people reported were related to the type of course in which they were enrolled in at 1992. For example, over half of the Vocational Education students reported that they improved their ability to use technology, and most Adult Basic Education and ESL students said they improved their language and communication skills.

However, key competency skills were gained even when the teaching of those skills was not necessarily an objective of the course. For example, a significant proportion of General Adult Education students (18 per cent) reported that they learnt to work better with people.

Education

The study aimed to determine the educational outcomes of participants. For example, the questionnaire looked at three outcomes: whether participants were assisted to prepare for further study at a tertiary institution, to do further ACE courses, or helped with studies they were doing at the time. Additionally, the questionnaire determined whether participants actually went on to study towards an educational qualification or completed further ACE courses.

The questionnaire findings indicated that adult and community education was not a 'one off' experience for many of the participants. A high proportion of both males (34 per cent) and females (45 per cent) have completed other ACE courses since 1992. This suggests a high degree of satisfaction with ACE courses.

1992 participants are choosing to continue to refine and improve their skills through involvement in adult and community education. In particular, a high proportion of Adult Basic Education and ESL students went on to do more ESL and/or Adult Basic Education subjects after 1992. However, only a small proportion of these students went on to do other types of courses, such as learning skills for a job or preferred job.

Discussion group participants indicated that there were particular features which attracted them to ACE, such as a supportive learning environment, and a perception that ACE courses made education an enjoyable learning experience. It was also recognised that ACE opens up opportunities for people who have had relatively little involvement in the school, university or TAFE systems.

Adult and community education was a pathway to studying towards a qualification[1] mainly for Access participants. 24 per cent of Access students began studying towards a qualification after the 1992 ACE course. There may have been a number of factors influencing this pathway. The ACE course could possibly have been one factor.

It was found that unemployed students experienced more educational outcomes and pathways than other participants responding to the questionnaire. For example, about 20 per cent of unemployed participants went on to study towards a qualification, compared to 17 per cent of those who were employed, and 11 per cent who were not in the labour force.

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[1] Includes year 10 and year 12.

Although a higher proportion of males than females were enrolled in Vocational Education courses in 1992, similar proportions of males and females went on to do courses to help them look for a job, or to learn skills or crafts for use in a job. This suggests that some females seek to obtain vocational skills through courses other than Vocational Education, such as General Adult Education.

Employment

The study sought to determine the employment outcomes and pathways of participants in adult and community education. For example, the questionnaire asked participants whether they learnt skills helpful for their current job, or whether they learnt skills to help them find a job, a better job, or start their own business.

Overall, 29 per cent of people expected to gain at least one employment outcome from their 1992 course. It should be remembered that ACE is a diverse sector, and that many people do not have any expectations of gaining vocational skills. For example, some people may simply be looking for some time to themselves in which to learn a skill or craft, perhaps for relaxation purposes.

A high proportion of Vocational Education students (60 per cent) reported that they gained at least one employment outcome. However, employment outcomes were not only restricted to these students. For example, 38 per cent of unemployed General Adult Education students said they learnt skills to help them find a job or start their own business.

For those who were employed, a high proportion of those who expected an employment outcome did achieve it. However, there was a fairly high proportion of unemployed people who expected to be helped to learn skills to find a job who did not achieve this (22 per cent). A likely explanation is the impact of the 1992 recession on job seekers' ability to find work. Additionally, while an unemployed student may not have reported an employment outcome, it is still fairly likely that they gained at least one vocational skill, as indicated earlier (refer to 'improvement in skills').

It was generally young people (those aged 15 to 24 years) who had the highest proportions reporting that they achieved employment outcomes. However, employed 35 to 44 year old participants had the greatest proportion reporting that they learnt skills for their current jobs (35 per cent). This indicates that ACE has a role to play in helping people to upgrade their skills for the workplace.

The discussion groups indicated that although participants may not have had employment related expectations to begin with, involvement in an adult and community education course sometimes motivated people to want to get a job or start their own businesses. Additionally, in order to be able to aspire to an employment outcome, people may first need to achieve some other outcomes. These outcomes may include improving self-esteem or learning some basic life skills such as reading, writing, maths and numeracy. Such outcomes from adult and community courses provide the key to future opportunities in terms of getting a job or going on to further education.

In terms of employment pathways, 43 per cent of those who were unemployed at the time of the 1992 course were working when they filled out the questionnaire. A number of factors could have influenced this change in labour force status. Involvement in ACE courses may have been one factor.

Benefits to individuals and society

Personal outcomes

By far the most significant outcomes for 1992 course participants were those related to personal benefits, particularly for women. Personal outcomes included being helped to deal with major changes to one's life, and being helped personally (eg. improved self-confidence). The discussion groups provided insight into the importance of participants gaining self-confidence in order to achieve education and employment outcomes.

A high proportion of respondents (63 per cent) reported that they were helped personally (eg. improved self confidence). There was a high proportion of people (21 per cent) who had experienced this outcome when they had not expected it before they started the course. A higher proportion of unemployed people (70 per cent) reported being helped personally, compared to those who were employed (60 per cent) and those not in the labour force (65 per cent).

Family outcomes

50 per cent of all respondents reported that they gained at least one family outcome from their 1992 course. Some examples of family outcomes included being helped to assist children with their schooling, becoming a better parent, and being helped to get along better with a spouse.

The questionnaire findings indicated that a higher proportion of ESL students were helped to become better parents (33 per cent) and to assist their children with their schooling (30 per cent) compared to students enrolled in other course types. In the discussion groups, NESB participants who improved their English speaking skills mentioned how their relationship with their children had improved because their children were proud of their parents' efforts to learn English.

A greater proportion of unemployed people than those who were employed or not in the labour force reported being assisted to help their children with their schooling, and in becoming better parents.

Community outcomes

ACE participants contribute significantly to the community through their involvement in voluntary work. Becoming involved or becoming more involved in voluntary work was reported by 15 per cent of all ACE participants. This outcome was more likely to be an outcome for ESL students (26 per cent), Adult Basic Education students (21 per cent) and unemployed students (27 per cent). ACE encourages people who may have previously been isolated because of their limited language skills to become more interested and involved in what is happening in their communities.

Overall, 37 per cent of respondents became more aware of services and information available in the community. Once again, this outcome was particularly prevalent among ESL students (62 per cent), Adult Basic Education students (49 per cent) and unemployed people (51 per cent).

Language, literacy and numeracy outcomes

As would be expected, these outcomes were mainly reported by ESL and Adult Basic Education students. A significant proportion of unemployed people reported these outcomes, and a greater proportion of males than females.

In the discussion groups, it was recognised by Adult Basic Education and ESL students that language and communication skills are vital in order to be able to find work or participate in society fully. The latter aspect includes being able to do the shopping, reading the papers, being informed about world events and having the ability to talk with teachers about their children's progress at school.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions

The study suggests that:

- ACE provides an environment where learning is an ongoing and enjoyable experience.
- ACE is providing quality education, as most people met their expectations of their 1992 course.
- disadvantaged groups, particularly the unemployed, people of NESB and early school leavers, gained a range of benefits from adult and community education.
- the skills and self-confidence that people gain from ACE, particularly language and literacy skills, increase their future opportunities in terms of education and employment.
- vocational skills may be gained from participants completing all ACE courses types, and not just from doing Vocational Education courses.

Policy implications

Policy implications arising from this study include:

- more women and people of NESB need to be encouraged into Vocational Education programs. Additionally, more NESB people could become involved in Access courses.
- more NESB women need to be encouraged into ESL courses. They also need to be encouraged to enrol in ESL courses at an earlier age. At present many NESB women tend to wait until their children are grown up before enrolling.
- there is scope to increase the participation in ACE of adults with fewer than 12 years of schooling.
- the profile of ACE could be raised amongst employers to ensure that employers recognise the value of participants who have done ACE courses.

PART ONE

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Victorian Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFEB) received funding in 1992 from the Department of Employment, Education and Training[1] for a national project to examine the outcomes and pathways of people attending adult and community education courses.

Recent government reports, at both a national and state level, have recognised the significant contribution the Adult and Community Education (ACE) sector makes to generating a society orientated towards learning. A key feature of the ACE sector is its provision of locally accessible and community based services, which gives educational opportunities to people who are unable or not comfortable with participating in more formal education programs.

The project brief outlines the areas which are commonly referred to as the broad categories of adult and community education outcomes and pathways. These are: improved employment and educational opportunities, personal development (eg. increased self-confidence), strengthened family life, and participation in community life.

Although these categories are recognised by people who work in the ACE sector, it has been mainly anecdotal information that has supported discussion and planning around outcomes and pathways in adult and community education. The brief identifies a need for information on the **outcomes** that participants say they have experienced as a result of being involved in adult and community education. Additionally, the brief states that research is needed into how adults use adult and community education as a **pathway** to employment, career advancement, vocational education and higher education.

Changes experienced by the ACE sector over the past few years make research into the benefits of adult and community education all the more timely. The sector has grown in both size and scope, assisted by increased government funding. There has been more demand for education orientated towards improving skills needed in the workforce. A consequence of this has been greater integration of education provided by schools, TAFE colleges, private training institutions, universities, industry and the adult and community education sector.

ACFEB commissioned the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to undertake a study to investigate the extent to which adult and community education is assisting people to participate in a society which is increasingly emphasising the need for life-long education and training that creates a more highly skilled and flexible workforce. The report produced from this study will assist policy development and planning at national, state and regional levels.

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[1] Funding responsibility was subsequently handed over to the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) in 1993.

1.2 SCOPE OF THE STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

The project brief required that adult and community education participants in NSW, Victoria and South Australia be included in the study. Additionally, two methods of data collection were proposed:

- detailed case studies, in the form of discussion groups, of 1992 course participants in order to identify key themes related to outcomes and pathways.
- a stratified sample survey of 1992 course participants in the three states which would collect information on socio-economic and demographic characteristics of students, and quantitative data on outcomes and pathways.

More detailed information on scope and methodology is given in Chapter 2.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 Aim

The aim of the study, as set out in the project brief, is to **demonstrate the extent to which Australians are using community based adult education to:**

(i) **increase employment opportunities**.

(ii) **participate in further study.**

(iii) **develop personal and practical skills**.

(iv) **strengthen family life, or**

(v) **enhance participation in community life.**

1.3.2 Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- develop a profile of 1992 course participants which includes information about their age, sex, educational background and other characteristics.
- determine the extent to which adult and community education has helped participants to improve key competency skills necessary for workforce participation.
- trace the educational outcomes and pathways of 1992 course participants to determine whether other adult and community education courses have been completed or educational qualifications studied towards.

- to explore whether adult and community education has improved employment opportunities for participants, particularly for the unemployed.
- understand the personal benefits that adult and community education can provide, and benefits to families and communities. In particular, to understand how such benefits can lead to other outcomes *(eg. education and employment outcomes).*
- understand how adult and community education has improved participants' language and communication skills, particularly for English as a Second Language (ESL) and Adult Basic Education students.
- examine whether people experience different outcomes and pathways depending on their characteristics, such as their age, employment status and what type of course they were enrolled in at 1992 (eg. Adult Basic Education, ESL, Access, Vocational Education and General Adult Education).

1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE ACE SECTOR

1.4.1 Introduction

This section helps to locate the *Outcomes and Pathways in Adult and Community Education* study within a broader framework. By outlining what adult and community education is about, including its philosophy and recent policy developments, the meaning of the results becomes clearer; for example, by indicating whether the ACE sector is achieving its goals. Additionally, documenting previous research on the outcomes and pathways of adult and community education participants enables new insights into the impact of adult and community education to be recognised and discussed.

1.4.2 What is adult and community education?

In *Come In Cinderella*, a 1991 report by the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training (SSCEET), adult and community education was defined in terms of its participants. That is, the participants in adult and community education have already left the formal education system and have returned to the ACE sector of their own accord. According to the report, adult and community education embodies a concern for a fair go and the equitable distribution of educational opportunity.

The rapidly expanding sector of adult and community education encompasses a broad range of programs. These programs include literacy, study skills, job related training, ESL and General Adult Education. General Adult Education, which is the best known form of adult and community education, includes programs such as politics, history, philosophy, science, arts, crafts, health, personal development, literature and languages (ACE/MOVEET Working Party 1993).

Adult education courses are offered by a broad range of organisations or providers. These include:

- community providers which comprise non-profit organisations usually under some form of democratic community control, such as neighbourhood houses or community learning centres, Workers Educational Associations (WEAs) and the Council of Adult Education (CAE).

- formal educational institutions which include schools, secondary colleges, TAFE and the higher education sector.

- private providers which operate particularly in the field of industry training and continuing professional education, but also include any private individual or firm offering to teach a skill for a fee (AAACE 1991).

1.4.3 What the ACE sector aims to achieve

Adult and community education seeks to provide educational opportunities for all adults. However, in particular, it increases opportunities for people with special needs who are under-represented in employment and training, such as Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, people of non-English speaking background, the unemployed, people with disabilities and people who are socially or geographically isolated (ACE/MOVEET Working Party 1993). *"It has an important compensatory or second chance role whereby people can overcome skill deficiencies, remedy shortcomings in previous formal education and training,* (and) *receive social and cultural benefits previously denied them"* (SSCEET 1991, p. 8).

The objectives of ACE extend beyond providing education to individuals, to assisting individuals to develop towards their full potential in work, family and community life. ACE also has a broader societal focus in that it aims to promote the development of an informed, tolerant and democratic society (AAACE; undated). Additionally, it promotes participation in local community activities and debates on issues of social concern such as the environment, and understanding of specific cultures (ACE/MOVEET Working Party 1993).

Linked with the goal of promoting a democratic society is the principle of actively involving participants in decisions about the management, content, style and delivery of their learning. It recognises that adults have diverse learning needs throughout their lives and aims to respond to these needs with a variety of provision (ACE/MOVEET Working Party 1993).

What ACE aims to achieve is affected by broader trends in education policy, for example greater provision of job related (or vocational) education. Many organisations are moving towards establishing competency based standards in the 1990s; ACE is also looking at developing such standards. According to Whyte (1994), the use of such standards in the ACE sector may seem unusual given that ACE has promoted the value of non-formal education and it has been a sector in which people could work without a licence to practice. Thus, the development of such standards brings with it a new degree of regulation.

The push for such standards has come about from the Training Reform Agenda of 1987. This policy initiative sought to achieve a more focused approach to vocational training on a national level; the portfolios of employment, education and training were united and vocational training linked with workplace reform and industrial relations.

According to Whyte (1994), this has resulted in some tension between 'the new vocationalism' and ACE's traditional provision of 'liberal education' (eg. philosophy, history and politics) which seeks to develop people intellectually and expose them to new ideas. Although the two are not in opposition to one another, they are significantly different.

1.4.4 Benefits of adult and community education

The *Come In Cinderella* report provided government recognition of the role of ACE which had long been sought by supporters of adult liberal education (Whyte 1994). Not only did the report recognise the personal benefits of adult and community education and benefits to families and communities, but also the vocational outcomes. However, there is increasing pressure for adult educators to substantiate the vocational and training outcomes of their programs. Increased funding and formal recognition of courses largely depends on working within the framework of the Training Reform Agenda (Whyte 1994). Previous research on the benefits of adult and community education is outlined below.

The personal benefits that participants have obtained from adult and community education are well documented. In particular, participants often experience an increase in their self-confidence. Research has shown that increased self-esteem is a major contributing factor to improved productivity and work performance (SSCEET 1991). Vocationally orientated courses may also help participants to develop personally. The 1994 ACFEB study *Snapshots: A statistical profile of adult students and their opinions* outlined how participants in a practical welding class made friends and established business contacts, which were unexpected outcomes of the course. Peters (1994) notes that unexpected benefits from adult and community education are often personal in nature, for example personal growth, increased self-confidence and empowerment.

Come In Cinderella mentions other personal and social outcomes of adult and community education, including self-actualisation, which is the realisation of one's own potential, and the development of an informed citizenry which has an awareness of and interest in issues of social concern. ACE also encourages new ways of thinking. The report also draws attention to the experiences of women, *"who as volunteer workers, in a supportive environment of a Neighbourhood House or community adult education centre, developed rapidly to a point from which they successfully applied for jobs, or embarked on a course at the local TAFE college"* (SSCEET 1991, p. 82).

The benefits of adult and community education extend beyond the individual and include benefits to the economy, the community and families. Funds invested in adult and community education result in savings in areas of public expenditure such as health and welfare, for example by relieving loneliness and depression and by providing social support networks (SSCEET 1991; Kimberley 1986).

The Outcomes Report (Kimberley 1986), which traced the pathways of people who attended a Community Provider in 1983, found that 65 per cent of participants considered that their attendance at a community provider assisted them to acquire skills helpful to community involvement. In terms of family benefits, parents who take a literacy or ESL course become better able to assist their children with reading and writing. This can ultimately benefit the economy, with children better equipped to participate in further education or training and the labour market (SSCEET 1991).

While the personal, social and community benefits of adult and community education are well known, the education and employment outcomes are less well recognised. According to the *Come In Cinderella* report, *"adult and community education is a sphere of activity deserving of more serious attention by the economic statisticians...."* (SSCEET 1991, p. 79). In particular, adult and community education can be a pathway to further education, training and employment (ACFEB 1994a; SSCEET 1991; Kimberley 1986).

Vocationally orientated courses are thought of as having vocational outcomes, yet there has been little attention given to the possible vocational and educational outcomes of other types of courses such as General Adult Education (Whyte 1994). General Adult Education courses can give participants the confidence, skills and networks they need to gain re-entry to more formal education programs (*Taskforce on Pathways in Education and Training* 1992).

Kimberley (1986) found that 33 per cent of those enrolled in a Community Provider in 1983 and who were not members of the paid workforce subsequently joined the workforce, and of those who were employed, 21 per cent improved the status of their occupation. In a recent study of Council of Adult Education (CAE) students in Melbourne, 12 per cent felt they had more skills to offer an employer and knew more about getting a job as a result of doing an adult education course (Peters 1994). In terms of educational outcomes, 32 per cent of participants enrolled in another CAE course, and 11 per cent studied a university or TAFE course.

In terms of skills development, not a great deal has been reported on the types of skills participants have gained from their involvement in adult and community education. Kimberley's report (1986) outlines skills attainment in areas such as time management, communication and decision making. As mentioned under the policy context section, the focus is now on vocational skill development. A number of reports have been produced on key competencies (eg. Finn in 1991 and Mayer in 1992) that recognise the core skills that young people need to learn in preparation for employment. Such reports have implications for the way in which the education sector, including adult educators, organise the teaching curriculum, undertake assessment and report on their activities (Mayer 1992).

CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to satisfy the aims and objectives of this study in establishing the outcomes and pathways of participants in adult and community education, two approaches were adopted. Firstly, there was a sample survey which involved sending a questionnaire to a sample of ACE participants. Secondly, ten discussion (or focus) groups were conducted at a range of ACE centres.

Both approaches involved selecting people in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia who were enrolled in ACE courses in 1992. These states were selected because of their ability to provide records of 1992 participants, the fact that community based adult education was well established, and their capacity to provide administrative support for the project.

Participants who did 1992 courses were chosen for the study as this date allowed for:

- sufficient time to have passed for the emergence of various outcomes and pathways for the participants.
- the effects of problems associated with recall to be kept within acceptable bounds.
- a greater likelihood of ACE centres having 1992 records of participants compared to earlier years.

The details relating to the conduct of both the sample survey and the discussion groups are described in the following sections.

2.2. THE SAMPLE SURVEY

2.2.1 Selecting the sample

The sample survey was conducted using a mail-out questionnaire. The first stage of the sampling procedure involved choosing a sample of ACE centres in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. These centres were then responsible for selecting a sample of their 1992 course participants and distributing the questionnaires to them. No records were sought by the ABS of which participants received a questionnaire, and no follow up action was taken to increase the response rate. These procedures were to ensure confidentiality for participants and to minimise the demands of the project on staff at the ACE centres.

The sample of centres was chosen to ensure that there was a representative mix of centres in each state in terms of whether they were:

- located in a capital city or rest of state.

- small, medium or large centres in terms of the number of courses offered or the number of participants[1].

- balanced in terms of the socio-economic status of the location of the ACE centres This was established through the use of the ABS' 1991 Socio-Economic Indexes For Areas.

Initially, it was decided that there would be a sample of 3,500 participants in each state. From this number, it was anticipated that there would be a return of at least 1,000 questionnaires from each state (a response rate of almost 30 per cent). Response rates for the pilot test conducted in Victoria on the questionnaire supported the likelihood of achieving this target.

However, the target of 3,500 participants could not be met in South Australia. This occurred because there were fewer centres in South Australia compared to the other two states. Additionally, the centres in South Australia were smaller, were generally less well resourced, and their 1992 records were less likely to be available. Consequently, the initial target of 3,500 participants for South Australia was revised to 2,500.

In the final analysis, centres in both New South Wales and Victoria distributed over 3,300 questionnaires, and centres in South Australia distributed slightly less than 2,100 questionnaires.

2.2.2 Which ACE centres were included?

Lists of ACE centres were obtained from the administrative agencies in each of the three states: BACE (NSW), ACFEB (Vic.) and the ACE Unit (SA). Lists were also obtained from the Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association in South Australia. Prior to the sample of ACE centres being chosen, certain centres were excluded from the lists. These were centres which were either:

- considered to be too small (that is, they provided less than ten courses each term in 1992 or, for South Australia, less than fifty participants during 1992).

- Universities of the Third Age (because they are orientated towards providing courses solely for a particular age group).

- Adult Migrant Education Centres (because they are not considered to be ACE centres).

The number of ACE centres which participated and the number of questionnaires supplied to each of those centres by the ABS are detailed in the table below. The number of questionnaires sent out to participants by some centres may have been less than the number supplied by the ABS.

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[1] In NSW, centre size was defined according to the number of enrolments. Small centres had less than 1,000 enrolments; medium centres between 1,000 and 7,000 enrolments; and large centres more than 7,000 enrolments. In Victoria and South Australia, centre size was defined according to the number of courses conducted at centres per week. Small centres were defined as conducting more than 10 but less than 20 courses per week; medium centres conducted between 20 and 49 courses per week, and large centres conducted 50 or more courses.

NUMBER AND SIZE OF ACE CENTRES AND NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES SENT TO ACE CENTRES

State	*Size of centre*	*Number of centres*	*Number of questionnaires sent to ACE centres*
Metropolitan			
NSW			
	Small	8	62
	Medium	6	165
	Large	6	165
Victoria			
	Small	8	50
	Medium	7	110
	Large	7	145
South Australia			
	Small	*10	50
	Medium	*9	100
	Large	*6	140
Non-metropolitan			
NSW			
	Small	*5	62
	Medium	*4	165
	Large	4	165
Victoria			
	Small	*5	50
	Medium	4	110
	Large	3	145
South Australia			
	Small**	*8	50

*Where there were resource constraints at some centres, half the specified number of questionnaires were sent to these centres.

**There were no large or medium-sized centres in non-metropolitan South Australia.

A list of centres which participated in the mail out sample survey is included as Appendix 1 of this report.

2.2.3 What the ACE centres were required to do

To assist ACE centres to choose a representative random sample of 1992 course participants, instructions were issued to each centre. A 008 telephone number for the Melbourne Office of the ABS was included in these instructions for those centres needing to seek further advice.

These instructions detailed which 1992 courses to include in the sample. Both funded and unfunded courses, including support groups, were treated as being in scope. However, courses which involved solely participative sports (including aerobics) were out of scope. Other exclusions were games such as mahjong, chess or bridge.

Centres were given the responsibility of writing the name of the course which each selected participant attended in 1992 on the front of the questionnaire.

Apart from the type of course attended, the sample had to be taken from participants who met the following two criteria[2]:

- they had to be aged 15 years or over, because this is the age group targeted by adult and community education.
- the duration of the course attended had to have been 12 hours or more (including homework).

ACE centres were asked to send participants in the sample the following:

- a letter explaining the need for the survey (see Appendix 2).
- a copy of a questionnaire (see Appendix 3).
- a reply paid envelope to the ABS.

2.2.4 The questionnaire

The selected participants were sent a questionnaire which had the name of the course attended in 1992 written clearly on the front (see Appendix 3). Details were sought for only one course, rather than for all of the courses which the participant attended in 1992. This was to allow a direct comparison of particular types of courses with certain expectations, outcomes and pathways. However, an outcome reported by a participant may have resulted from a number of different factors, not just the 1992 course. For example, while a participant may have reported that the 1992 course helped them to learn skills to find a job, there may also have been other forms of assistance, such as from friends or the CES.

The questionnaire first established whether the participant had attended at least three quarters of the classes for the course. Participants who attended less than three quarters of the classes were deemed to have not attended for sufficient time to enable the course to lead to a possible outcome or pathway. These participants were therefore not included in the analysis for the study.

By the cut-off period for the return of questionnaires, over 1,100 questionnaires had been received from New South Wales and Victoria and over 420 were received from South Australia. After sorting out questionnaires which were out of scope (including those where less than three quarters of all classes were attended), the final numbers used in the analysis were 1,013 for New South Wales, 1,011 for Victoria and 364 for South Australia.

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[2] These criteria also applied for the discussion groups.

2.2.5 Limitations of the survey

Overall, the conduct of the survey encountered few problems in New South Wales and Victoria. In South Australia, however, there were some difficulties finding centres that were able to participate, for reasons explained below.

The issues regarding the conduct of the survey related to the distribution of the questionnaires and the filling out of questionnaires, particularly by respondents. These issues are listed below, along with how they might have affected the findings.

The distribution of the questionnaires

The issues associated with the distribution of questionnaires were as follows:

- some centres, particularly in South Australia, were not able to participate as they had either not retained or not collected records of 1992 course participants.
- in a few instances, centres only had names but not addresses, and therefore could not participate. Additionally, there were some centres that did not wish to participate.
- some centres were only able to send out a portion of their allocated workload. In South Australia, often only the better resourced (more often, the larger) centres were able to participate. For South Australia, participants enrolled in smaller centres are likely to have been under-represented.
- there was a possibility that 1992 participants may have changed addresses by the time of the survey. Hence, relatively mobile people are likely to have been under-represented.

The filling out of questionnaires

The issues associated with the filling out of questionnaires were as follows:

- the relative complexity of the questionnaire could have presented difficulties for some respondents; for example, non-English speaking migrants, and people with poor literacy. As a result, the proportion of returned questionnaires from such people was likely to have been less than for the remainder of the sample.
- as there was no follow-up action taken to remind participants to send in their questionnaires, there was likely to have been an under-representation of those who were not as willing or able to respond to the survey in a timely way.

2.3 THE CONDUCT OF THE DISCUSSION GROUPS

2.3.1 Why have discussion groups?

Discussion (or focus) groups are a discussion of approximately 90 to 120 minutes led by a trained facilitator, involving 8 to 10 persons (Greenbaum 1993). The purpose of using discussion groups for the study was to obtain a range of qualitative information. Qualitative research attempts to capture people's meanings, definitions and descriptions of events (Minichiello et al. 1990). Such information could not be adequately obtained using a quantitative research design (eg. questionnaires). This is because respondents to a questionnaire may not sufficiently explain their circumstances or opinions, or they may be reluctant to put their thoughts into writing due to time constraints.

The findings of discussion groups cannot be regarded as representative of ACE participants as a whole, due to the small numbers of people involved. But this is not the purpose of this method of research. Rather than using the data to quantify and measure, the data is studied for themes in the natural language of the participants. The participants' descriptions and experiences of their social world are made accessible to other people (Minichiello et al. 1990).

To ensure that each discussion group covered all possible outcomes and pathways of interest to the study, a group interview schedule was developed (see Appendix 4). This schedule was used more as a checklist for the facilitator, rather than as a formal determinant of the conduct of the discussion.

2.3.2 Which ACE centres were included?

The study sought to hold ten discussion groups in the following locations:

(i) 2 in Sydney.

(ii) 1 in the remainder of New South Wales.

(iii) 3 in Melbourne.

(iv) 2 in the remainder of Victoria, and

(v) 2 in Adelaide.

The administrative agencies in each of the three states (BACE, ACFEB and the ACE Unit) were responsible for advising which centres to approach to take part in the discussion groups. As far as possible, the centres chosen covered a range of large and small centres, as well as high, low and medium areas of socio-economic status.

Centres that took part sent letters to their 1992 participants from the same or similar courses asking them to participate in a discussion group. In instances when not enough people responded to the letter, direct contact was made by telephone.

In the final analysis, nine discussion groups were held, rather than the ten initially planned. This was because one discussion group in Victoria had to be cancelled at the last moment when a number of participants were not able to attend and no alternative day or time could be found. Information was obtained from these participants by telephone instead.

2.3.3 The conduct of the discussion groups

The ten discussion groups involved participants who attended ACE courses in 1992. Each of the ten discussion groups consisted of participants who came from the same course (but not necessarily the same class) or were from similar courses. This was done to facilitate discussion amongst the participants by providing them with a common focus for conversation.

To ensure that a broad range of expectations and outcomes were obtained from the discussion groups, various types of courses were selected, from Vocational Education to General Adult Education courses.

Discussion groups were held at the ACE centres participants had attended in 1992, as it was felt that this environment would be non-threatening and convenient for participants. Generally, 12 participants were selected for each discussion group on the basis that between seven to ten would actually come. Between five and ten people attended each discussion group.

Two facilitators were used for each discussion group. One had the principal task of conducting the session, while the other helped to prompt for responses and ensured that all participants were given opportunities to contribute to the discussion.

2.3.4 Limitations of the discussion groups

The problems encountered in conducting the discussion groups were minor. Overall, there was very good co-operation from the ACE centres, and the participants who were able to attend the discussion groups were happy to talk about the course they attended in 1992.

Issues associated with the conduct of the discussion groups included:

- people proficient in English were possibly more likely to come to the discussion groups. However, to ensure a more balanced representation, two of the ten discussion groups were comprised of participants from ESL and literacy classes.
- while discussion groups are regarded as a vehicle to encourage people to talk freely, it may be that individuals 'go along' with the predominant views of the group, rather than express their own opinions.

These issues are unlikely to have had a significant impact on the discussion group findings. In fact, the discussion groups were extremely successful in gaining an understanding of what benefits participants gained from undertaking adult and community education courses.

CHAPTER 3 DISCUSSION GROUPS SUMMARY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Nine discussion groups were conducted at a range of ACE centres, while participants at a tenth centre were interviewed by telephone. Findings for the ten individual discussion groups are included in part two of this report.

From the analysis of the discussion group interviews, five major themes emerged in terms of the participants' expectations of the course they attended in 1992 and the outcomes after doing this course. These themes were:

(i) employment.

(ii) education.

(iii) community or voluntary work.

(iv) personal benefits, and

(v) 'life skills'.

3.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF THE DISCUSSION GROUPS

3.2.1 Employment

For some participants, employment outcomes included finding a job, learning skills for a current job, or acquiring vocationally useful skills that may be of assistance to future workforce participation.

Some unemployed participants found jobs as a direct result of completing a 1992 ACE course. For example, one person who completed a keyboarding course found a job which required using the skills she had gained. Another person, who did a course to improve his reading and writing, gained a truck licence and was subsequently able to get a job as a truck driver.

For other unemployed people, doing ACE courses provided them with skills which increased their chances of finding employment. For example, some of those who attended an ESL class believed that their improved English had advanced their job prospects. Also, participants who attended the computing classes mentioned the importance of learning new skills to enable them 'to keep up' with others who competed with them for jobs. While many of those who were unemployed at the time of the 1992 course had not found employment, they saw themselves as having a greater potential, through their increased level of skills and self-confidence, to contribute to the workforce than otherwise would have been the case.

For participants who were employed, there were also vocational outcomes, such as contributing to or expanding a family business, improving efficiency at work by improving English speaking or literacy skills, or by having a better understanding of computers.

The discussion groups showed that it is important to examine employment outcomes much more broadly than simply looking at whether participants found a job or learnt vocational skills. For example, ACE courses helped to provide unemployed people with a much needed boost in self-confidence by providing them with a sense of achievement. This was noted by some people who completed the Home Maintenance course. Although this type of course is not associated with employment outcomes, it may still assist unemployed people by making them feel more positive about themselves. Improved self-confidence can then lead to other outcomes such as pursuing further study.

Although overall numbers were too low to draw definite conclusions, there were some differences between men and women in relation to their employment outcomes. Men seemed to be more often seeking conventional employment outcomes, such as finding a job. In comparison, some unemployed women developed a skill or craft and earned some extra income as a result, but usually informally, such as by selling their craftwork to family and friends. Often this was not an expectation at the beginning of the course.

Only a small number of the discussion group participants indicated that finding a job was their main expectation, except for those who attended the keyboarding or computing classes. For the majority of participants, expectations of their course were expressed in terms of learning the skill or knowledge the course aimed to teach, or wanting to obtain a sense of achievement. The fairly low numbers of people expecting to find work may be a reflection of the adverse economic climate existing in 1992 which could have dampened people's hopes of gaining employment. However, it should also be recognised that ACE is a very diverse sector and caters for people with a range of expectations, not just those who seek conventional employment outcomes.

In a few of the discussion groups, barriers to achieving employment outcomes were identified. For example, some women who attended needlecraft or calligraphy classes had considered setting up 'cottage enterprises' or earning income from their craft but said that their families came first and there wasn't the time to set up their own businesses. Another barrier, which was mentioned by some participants who were unemployed, was the feeling that their skills were not being recognised by employers, including skills gained from doing voluntary work. Furthermore, there were participants who commented that employers appeared reluctant to employ 'older' people (aged over forty), regardless of their skills.

3.2.2 Education

Education, in its various forms, was often an outcome of ACE courses for the discussion group participants. Since doing a course in 1992, many participants have gone on to do further ACE courses and TAFE courses, and some have gone on to higher education.

For some discussion group participants, the decision to do further courses or study was a direct result of completing their 1992 ACE course. For others, there were a range of factors influencing the decision to continue with some form of study. However, even in the latter group, the confidence gained from doing an ACE course and the co-operative, friendly atmosphere at the centres encouraged people to go on to do further study.

The effect of ACE education in causing participants to consider going on to do tertiary education can be illustrated by the discussion group with participants who had attended Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) English classes. At the start of the VCE English classes, some of the younger participants had firm expectations of going on to do tertiary education after obtaining their VCE, while most of the older participants had enrolled in the classes less certain of what they hoped to do after completing their VCE. For them, finishing the VCE was a goal in itself. At the discussion group however, this situation had changed, with all participants stating that they intended to go on to tertiary education.

Discussion group participants had a high regard for adult and community education. Some adult literacy students had negative experiences when they were at school, and adult and community education helped to overcome these because courses were tailored to their needs. As a consequence, some participants who had done an adult literacy or ESL class had gone on to do VCE English or other forms of study. This type of positive experience was felt by others as well. For example, in the Calligraphy discussion group, it was mentioned how ACE courses open up opportunities for people who do not feel comfortable with formal education.

Other aspects about adult and community education that participants liked included the flexibility of the course content; ACE is often regarded as offering courses that are more flexible and more practical than those at schools, TAFE institutions and universities. Most participants liked the learning style of adult education courses. They found adult education classes friendlier and less impersonal than secondary schools and universities. The flexibility of ACE courses, the provision of child care facilities and the proximity of centres to their homes appeared to be particularly important to women with school age children or toddlers.

In the Calligraphy discussion group it was mentioned how adult and community education is an ongoing learning experience in that many participants go on to do more ACE courses or other forms of study. ACE courses give some participants a feeling of being part of something that is worthwhile and special, and each course is considered to be a progression in learning more skills.

3.2.3 Community or voluntary work

Involvement in voluntary work was an outcome for a number of the 1992 course participants. In many instances this was not an expected outcome when the participant enrolled at the ACE centre, but resulted from the confidence and motivation gained from attending the course. Some found out that the skills they learnt enabled them to be of greater assistance to voluntary agencies. The majority of participants in the discussion groups who were involved or who became involved in voluntary work were aged forty years or over.

At the time the discussion groups were held, participants were involved in a diverse range of voluntary work including teaching English to migrants, working with the Red Cross, performing voluntary work in schools and with adult education centres. Some have been motivated by adult and community education to form support groups or to be committee members of such groups.

In some instances, ACE courses not only gave participants the confidence to engage in community or voluntary work, but helped remove barriers to this type of involvement. For example, there was a person who wanted to teach disabled children how to use computers and coach children in sport, but was not able to because he needed to improve his literacy skills. After completing an ACE literacy class, he was able to achieve this goal.

Many of the participants who have gone on to do voluntary work have continued to do ACE courses or have gone on to do other forms of study. The effect of this is likely to be better skilled voluntary workers. These people may be part of a group which, through the gaining of improved skills and self-confidence, has developed a greater potential to contribute to the workforce, particularly with improvements to the economy.

Apart from making this contribution to the community, participants have also learnt more about their local community, for example learning more about what ACE courses are available and discovering the range of community services that exist.

3.2.4 Personal benefits

Many of those who participated in the discussion groups had expectations centred on personal development rather than employment. For some, particularly those who had felt isolated in the community because they were looking after young children, or had poor literacy skills, it took a great deal of courage to step inside the door of a neighbourhood house or an adult education centre. The seeking of some form of personal development from the course may therefore reflect the need to realise one's own potential and self-worth before the possibility arises of going on to aspire to education, employment and other outcomes.

Personal benefits, such as developing increased self-confidence and motivation, were frequently mentioned outcomes of ACE courses, and were sometimes unexpected. Some participants overcame the negative attitudes of others in order to attend adult and community education programs. A few participants were told by family members or acquaintances that they would not be capable of doing a course or that they were too old. Participants' increased self-confidence and motivation subsequently became reflected across all types of outcomes, including employment and education, as participants came to realise their potential and their ability to set and achieve goals.

Some participants discussed how they had been unable to speak to large numbers of people before doing adult education courses, but now have the confidence to talk in public or to become involved in support groups or voluntary work. Often these courses can significantly improve a person's well-being. For example, it was mentioned how ACE courses can alleviate the disappointment of not being able to find a job. Additionally, some participants found that such courses provided valued time for social interaction, usually combined with obtaining practical knowledge, in a congenial atmosphere.

Becoming motivated and obtaining improved decision making skills were other outcomes that were mentioned by participants. Examples of this included becoming more motivated to learn and apply themselves to a craft or skill, to make decisions (such as buying a house), and seeing those decisions through. Improved decision making is not necessarily only an outcome of a decision making course, which indicates that courses may lead to outcomes other than those that are set out in the course objectives. For example, some participants who completed the Calligraphy course mentioned how they were better able to concentrate on issues in their daily lives as a result of doing the course. Furthermore, adult and community education provided some people with the self-discipline to learn a skill or craft. For these people, enrolling in a class was an affirmation of a resolve and commitment to learn or devote time to an interest or craft.

Some of the groups of people among whom personal benefits were particularly apparent included women, retired participants and people of non-English speaking background.

For women with young children, doing an ACE course gave them some valued time away from the demands and responsibilities of parenthood, and an opportunity to re-establish their identity. Women were more likely than men to stress that ACE education provided them with ongoing social contact, motivation and personal development, as well as the opportunity to learn. Some women who completed the calligraphy or sewing classes became sufficiently assertive to insist of their spouses or children that they have time to themselves to devote to their craft.

Retired participants also gained a great deal from adult and community education. It was mentioned how adult and community education can keep one's mind active in retirement by pursuing an interest. This further reinforces the notion that learning is an ongoing concern, not something which ends after formal education.

People of non-English speaking background who did ESL courses mentioned that they gained a lot of pride in themselves. It was very important to them that others were proud of their efforts to learn English, particularly their children, who had often found their non-English speaking parent an embarrassment to them in public. Additionally, new arrivals in an area, including migrants, found ACE courses a good way to get to know people and helped them to overcome feelings of isolation.

The individual discussion groups showed that a particular outcome can snowball on to different types of outcomes in the future. For example, improving literacy skills builds confidence which may assist with day-to-day tasks such as filling in forms, shopping, reading newspapers or enabling people to work more effectively. The increased confidence obtained in this way may lead to other outcomes such as undertaking further courses or becoming involved in voluntary work.

It is not only the individual participants who obtain personal benefits from taking an adult education course, but also their families and the wider community. In many instances, mothers undertook courses so they could help their children or grandchildren with their schooling.

Some of the participants in the discussion groups were also better able to help their children or other family members with English speaking, literacy or computer skills. Furthermore, some mentioned how they had become closer to their children or partner as a result of doing a course, and believed that they and their skills (for example, sewing) were more appreciated by their family than before.

3.2.5 Life skills

Adult and community education courses equip participants with life skills such as literacy skills so that they can participate in society more fully and effectively. For example, participants who completed a literacy or ESL course were then able to fill in forms rather than having to ask someone to help them. These people were also better able to do daily tasks such as shopping.

Being able to communicate better with people was a particularly important life skill that was gained. Many of the participants who completed an ESL course in 1992 mentioned that they no longer required an interpreter on most occasions. They are now more capable of discussing matters with people, such as talking to teachers about their children's performance at school.

Some people mentioned how they had become more interested in current issues as a result of doing an adult education course because they can now listen to the news on television, read the paper and have the confidence to engage in discussions with people. Additionally, adult and community education, because of its social and co-operative approach to learning, enhances participants' social skills, such as becoming more tolerant of others and being able to make friends with people from different backgrounds.

Some participants said that their horizons had expanded by doing adult education courses. For example, it was mentioned that adult education courses brought together a wide cross section of the community where different points of view were discussed and respected. Completing adult education courses can lead participants to setting themselves goals and challenges for the future by allowing them to have a better appreciation of their own potential and by giving them a sense of achievement which may have been lacking.

For women, the life skills that were gained from ACE included developing social skills after being at home with children for long periods to the point where they felt isolated and uncomfortable interacting with people. Additionally, adult and community education sometimes empowers women. For example, some of the women who completed the Home Maintenance course mentioned how they are now able to do maintenance tasks themselves or to understand what is a reasonable price to pay tradespeople for home maintenance tasks.

It should be kept in mind that many of the employment or education outcomes of an ACE course may not have been apparent at the time the discussion groups were conducted. For example, a mother may not have gone on to do another course or seek employment after her 1992 course because of child care responsibilities. However, later on she may use the confidence or skills she gained from the ACE course to find a job, do more ACE courses or perhaps enrol in tertiary studies.

CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The questionnaire for the study covered participants' expectations, outcomes and pathways, as well as their demographic characteristics. A copy of the questionnaire appears in Appendix 3. This chapter presents the findings from the questionnaire under five headings:

(i) a profile of participants who enrolled in adult education courses during 1992, with an emphasis on the type of courses the participants were enrolled in.

(ii) the improvement in skills which resulted from doing the course.

(iii) further education outcomes and pathways which occurred after commencing the course.

(iv) employment outcomes and pathways which occurred after commencing the course.

(v) the benefits of adult and community education to individuals and society. These include personal, family and community outcomes, and language, literacy and numeracy outcomes.

In conducting this analysis, the definition of type of course was based on the program categories developed by ACFEB in Victoria (see Appendix 5). The Victorian definition was used because of the absence of a standard definition across the three States in which the survey was conducted. The five course types used in this analysis are: Vocational Education, Access, English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education and General Adult Education. ACFEB outlines six program categories, but for the purposes of this analysis, 'Access' includes both General Access and VCE (which is equivalent to SACE and HSC) courses.

The data presented in this analysis are unweighted; that is, the units in the sample have not been weighted to represent all the participants in adult and community education in 1992. This occurred because the number of participants in 1992 was unknown, largely because many centres did not keep complete records in 1992 of their enrolments.

4.2. PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS IN ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

By looking at the profile of the participants in adult and community education, we are able to determine whether disadvantaged groups within the community are gaining access to this form of education. Particular groups of interest include people of NESB background, unemployed people, young people and women. Due to insufficient numbers responding to the questionnaire, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders were not included in the analysis.

This section is divided into six parts, each of which deals with a socio-demographic characteristic of the participants:

(i) sex

(ii) age

(iii) family type

(iv) languages spoken at home

(v) highest educational qualifications, and

(vi) labour force status at the time of the 1992 course.

4.2.1 Sex

Of the 2,388 persons who responded to the survey, 79 per cent were female and 20 per cent were male[1]. This finding is in line with other existing sources of 1992 enrolment data from BACE in NSW and ACFEB in Victoria. Data from South Australia were not available.

Reasons for the greater participation of females in ACE are well documented. In particular, it has been found that adult and community education provides a supportive learning environment for women who may lack confidence and skills (SSCEET 1991). Other reasons which emerged from the discussion groups included the expressed need of many women to have an interest, social contact or identity outside of their family life, and the accessibility of ACE centres in terms of location and the hours in which the courses were held. Responses to the open-ended questions on the questionnaire (questions 9b and 35) also indicated that the affordability of ACE courses was another contributory reason.

Table 1 presents a detailed breakdown of the number of females and males who were enrolled in each type of course at 1992. The table shows that, of the respondents:

- females were more likely to do a General Adult Education course. 58 per cent of females were enrolled in General Adult Education, compared to 43 per cent of males.
- of the male respondents, 26 per cent were enrolled in Vocational Education courses, compared to 17 per cent of females.
- 11 per cent of male and 5 per cent of female participants were enrolled in Adult Basic Education courses.
- 7 per cent of male and 4 per cent of female participants were enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses.

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[1] Approximately 2 per cent of respondents did not state their sex.

However, although a higher proportion of male students than females were enrolled in Vocational Education, Adult Basic Education or ESL courses, in terms of numbers, there were more females. For example; of the total number of students who attended a Vocational Education course, 323 (or 72 per cent) were female and 121 (27 per cent) were male.

TABLE 1. TYPE OF COURSE BY SEX

	Number			*Per cent*		
Type of course	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons(a)*	*Males*	*Females*	*Total(a)*
Adult basic education	52	92	150	11	5	6
ESL	32	84	117	7	4	5
Access	54	228	284	12	12	12
Vocational education	121	323	450	26	17	19
General adult education	201	1,089	1,314	43	58	55
Total(b)	**468**	**1,875**	**2,388**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) Includes persons for whom sex was not stated.
(b) Includes persons for whom type of course was not stated or who attended more than one course.

4.2.2 Age

Of the respondents to the survey, those aged 35 to 54 years made up almost half of the participants in adult and community education, while those aged 55 years or over made up another quarter. Participants aged 15 to 24 years made up only 7 per cent of the total, reflecting the greater likelihood of the population in this age group to be in the formal education system. Population census data for 1991 indicates that the proportion of ACE participants who are aged 35 to 54 years is significantly higher than the proportion in the general population. In comparison, the proportion of ACE participants aged 55 years and over reflects the general population.

Table 2 shows a detailed breakdown of respondents' age by the type of course in which they were enrolled in at 1992. The data indicates that:

- for all age groups, the most enrolments were in General Adult Education courses. The 25 to 34 and 65 years and over age groups had the greatest proportion of enrolments in General Adult Education (over 60 per cent of both groups).

- the 15 to 24 year old age group had the greatest proportion of respondents enrolled in Vocational Education courses. About a third of this age group and a quarter of participants aged 35 to 44 years were enrolled in Vocational Education. This may indicate that people within these two age groups are most likely to be seeking skills to either enter or re-enter the workforce, or to improve their skills within their workplaces.

- of people aged 45 years and older, 7 per cent were enrolled in ESL compared to 3 per cent of those aged less than 45. One possible reason for this, as established in the discussion groups, could be that many migrant women wait until their children are old enough to look after themselves before commencing a course. Another reason could be that many migrant workers with limited English language skills lost their jobs in the recession. In the ABS survey of retrenched workers it was established that unemployed people either aged 45 years or over or of NESB who lost their jobs during the recession had found it relatively difficult to obtain alternative employment during this period (ABS 1993a). Therefore, it would have been particularly difficult for older migrants to find work. ESL courses may have been perceived by unemployed NESB people as a way to improve their job prospects.

- 18 per cent of 15 to 24 year olds were enrolled in Access courses, a greater proportion than other age groups. The discussion groups indicated that younger participants enrolled in Access courses were probably seeking to obtain higher qualifications, while older Access participants were more likely to be doing the course out of interest or as a challenge.

TABLE 2. AGE GROUP (YEARS) BY TYPE OF COURSE

Age group (years)	*Adult basic education*	*ESL*	*Access*	*Vocational education*	*General adult education*	*Total(a)*
			NUMBER			
15-24	13	3	29	56	61	164
25-34	27	11	35	77	242	399
35-44	34	22	69	148	327	611
45-54	42	33	64	98	265	519
55-64	14	28	45	44	215	366
65+	17	18	41	21	183	293
Total(b)	**150**	**117**	**284**	**450**	**1,314**	**2,388**
			PER CENT			
15-24	8	2	18	34	37	100
25-34	7	3	9	19	61	100
35-44	6	4	11	24	54	100
45-54	8	6	12	19	51	100
55-64	4	8	12	12	59	100
65+	6	6	14	7	62	100
Total(b)	**6**	**5**	**12**	**19**	**55**	**100**

(a) Includes persons for whom type of course was not stated or who attended more than one course.
(b) Includes persons for whom age was not stated.

4.2.3 Relationship in the household

Of the 2,388 respondents, 39 per cent were parents in a two-parent family, and 29 per cent were with a partner but had no children. People who lived alone made up 11 per cent of the total sample and 7 per cent were sole parents. A further 11 per cent had a relationship in the household other than that described above.

Comparisons with 1991 population census data indicate that there was a higher proportion of ACE participants who were either sole parents or people with partners but no children, compared to the general population. The proportion of people in ACE who were either in a two-parent family or living alone reflects the situation in the general population.

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Table 3 presents a detailed breakdown of male and female respondents and their relationship in their household. The data shows that:

- 40 per cent of female and 35 per cent of male ACE participants were parents in a two-parent family. By contrast, in the formal education system, 11 per cent of female and 14 per cent of male participants were parents in a two-parent family (ABS 1993b, p. 110).

- 8 per cent of female students were sole parents compared to 4 per cent of male students. By contrast, in the formal education system, 4 per cent of female and 3 per cent of male participants were sole parents (ABS 1993b, p.110).

- there was a greater proportion of males (34 per cent) than females (28 per cent) in ACE who were living with a partner but had no children.

- an equal proportion of female and male participants lived alone (11 per cent).

The figures listed above suggest that adult and community education is more accessible to people with children than is the formal education system.

TABLE 3. RELATIONSHIP IN HOUSEHOLD BY SEX

	Number			*Per cent*		
Relationship in household	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons(a)*	*Males*	*Females*	*Total(a)*
Lives alone	51	209	272	11	11	11
Parents in a two-parent family household	164	757	925	35	40	39
Sole parent	18	158	176	4	8	7
Lives with partner but no children	157	519	688	34	28	29
Other	71	193	265	15	10	11
Total(b)	**468**	**1,875**	**2,388**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) Includes persons for whom sex was not stated.
(b) Includes persons for whom relationship in household was not stated.

4.2.4 Languages spoken at home

Of the respondents to the survey, 82 per cent spoke only English at home. A further 6 per cent spoke a selected European language (includes German, Greek, Italian and Spanish languages only), 3 per cent spoke a selected Asian language (includes Chinese and Vietnamese languages only) and 6 per cent spoke other languages. The 1991 population census shows that these proportions reflect those in the general community for people aged 15 years or over.

Table 4 shows the languages spoken at home by the respondents, by the type of course completed in 1992. This table indicates that:

- of those students who attended an ESL course, 39 per cent spoke a selected Asian language at home, 28 per cent spoke a selected European language, while 27 per cent spoke another language at home.

- NESB participants were also well represented in Adult Basic Education courses. While two thirds of students in these courses spoke only English at home, 10 per cent spoke a selected European language, 5 per cent spoke a selected Asian language, and 11 per cent spoke another language.

- the majority of participants enrolled in Access courses spoke English only. No respondent who was enrolled in an Access course spoke one of the selected Asian languages at home, while only 5 per cent spoke a selected European language and a similar proportion spoke another language at home.

- comparatively low participation rates of NESB participants occurred for Vocational Education and General Adult Education courses.

These findings indicate that NESB participants in adult and community education are either primarily concerned with the acquisition of English language skills and improving their literacy or numeracy skills, or perhaps they are not confident enough or aware of other course offered by ACE centres.

TABLE 4. LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME BY TYPE OF COURSE

Languages spoken at home(a)	*Adult basic education*	*ESL*	*Access*	*Vocational education*	*General adult education*	*Total(b)*
			NUMBER			
English language only	99	6	243	405	1,145	1,957
Selected European language	15	33	14	20	49	136
Selected Asian language	8	46	0	3	9	66
Other language	16	32	14	9	58	134
Total(c)	**150**	**117**	**284**	**450**	**1,314**	**2,388**
			PER CENT			
English language only	66	5	86	90	87	82
Selected European language	10	28	5	4	4	6
Selected Asian language	5	39	0	1	1	3
Other language	11	27	5	2	4	6
Total(c)	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) Selected European language includes Italian, Greek, German, Spanish and Macedonian languages. Selected Asian language includes Vietnamese and Chinese languages.

(b) Includes persons for whom type of course was not stated or who attended more than one course.

(c) Includes persons for whom languages other than English spoken at home was not stated. More than one language may have been spoken at home.

4.2.5 Highest educational qualifications

Overall, slightly less than half of the 2,388 respondents had a post-school qualification. 15 per cent of respondents had a bachelor degree or higher qualification, 10 per cent had a diploma or equivalent and 4 per cent had a trade certificate or apprenticeship. 18 per cent had some other form of post-school certificate as their highest educational qualification.

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The corresponding proportions for participants with no post-school qualifications were: 18 per cent had obtained a secondary school certificate as their highest qualification, 18 per cent completed year 10, while 12 per cent had not completed year 10.

The data for people with other post-school certificates needs to be treated with some caution, as a proportion of these respondents most likely included non-accredited qualifications in their responses to the questionnaire. This means that the number of respondents who indicated that they have other certificates is likely to be overstated, and consequently, this applies also to those who have post-school qualifications.

The proportion of respondents without a post-secondary school qualification (ie. those who had completed year 12 or less) was 48 per cent compared to approximately 61 per cent for the total Australian population aged 15 years or over, as measured by the 1991 population census. Therefore (even after taking into account the note of caution above), adult and community education participants, overall, are more highly qualified compared to the total Australian population. This was also found in a recent survey conducted in NSW, as outlined in the report *The Vocational Scope of ACE* (1993).

Table 5 outlines the participants' highest educational qualification cross classified by the type of course in which they were enrolled in at 1992. The data presented shows that the educational qualification profile of participants in different course types varies markedly.

- of the 150 persons who were enrolled in Adult Basic Education courses, almost half had either only completed year 10 or had not reached this level.

- for the 117 respondents enrolled in ESL courses, two thirds had not progressed beyond year 10.

- of those who completed an Access course, a quarter had attained, as their highest educational qualification, a secondary school certificate, while another 21 per cent had completed year 10. Thus, adult and community education may be perceived as a conduit to further education and training by those who have varying degrees of secondary school education.

- 21 per cent of those who attended Vocational Education programs had obtained an 'other certificate', while a further 26 per cent had some other form of post-school qualification. However, 30 per cent of students had not progressed beyond year 10. This suggests that Vocational Education courses are undertaken by people trying to improve their vocational skills, regardless of what level of qualifications they currently have; perhaps to better meet the needs of a changing work environment.

- 52 per cent of students doing General Adult Education courses had some form of post-school qualification.

TABLE 5. HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION BY TYPE OF COURSE

Highest educational qualification	*Adult basic education*	*ESL*	*Access*	*Vocational education*	*General adult education*	*Total(a)*
			NUMBER			
Year 10	30	30	61	88	204	435
Secondary school certificate	10	14	72	90	235	435
Trade certificate/ apprenticeship	6	5	12	15	53	91
Other certificate(b)	14	7	38	95	276	441
Diploma or equivalent(c)	9	4	29	51	140	237
Bachelor degree	11	3	28	37	122	207
Post graduate qualification	7	1	21	18	95	144
None of the above	43	48	16	43	127	284
Total(d)	**150**	**117**	**284**	**450**	**1,314**	**2,388**
			PER CENT			
Year 10	20	26	21	20	16	18
Secondary school certificate	7	12	25	20	18	18
Trade certificate/ apprenticeship	4	4	4	3	4	4
Other certificate(b)	9	6	13	21	21	18
Diploma or equivalent(c)	6	3	10	11	11	10
Bachelor degree	7	3	10	8	9	9
Post graduate qualification	5	1	7	4	7	6
None of the above	29	41	6	10	10	12
Total(d)	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) Includes persons for whom type of course was not stated or who attended more than one course.
(b) Figures for 'other certificate' should be treated with some caution. This category may include people who did courses that were not accredited post-school qualifications, or people who completed a secondary school qualification, eg leaving certificate, but who ticked this category in error.
(c) Includes associate diplomas, undergraduate diplomas, technicians' certificates and advanced certificates.
(d) Includes persons for whom highest educational qualification was not stated.

4.2.6 Labour force status at time of 1992 course

At the time of their enrolment in the 1992 course, 1,119 respondents were employed either in full-time or part-time work. This figure corresponds to 47 per cent of respondents. A further 225 (9 per cent of the participants) were unemployed, while persons not in the labour force (those not employed and not seeking work) made up 1,001 or 42 per cent of respondents.

Of the total Australian population aged 15 years and over in June 1992, 56 per cent were employed, 7 per cent were unemployed and 37 per cent were not in the labour force. Therefore, there was a greater proportion of people who were either unemployed or not in the labour force in the sample survey, compared to the Australian population. This could reflect the goal of ACE to increase opportunities for people who are not working (Whyte 1994). To establish whether this is the case, the analysis sought to examine the mix of students, in regards to their labour force status, for each type of course.

Table 6 provides details of the respondents' labour force status for each type of course undertaken in 1992. This table indicates that:

- of respondents who undertook Vocational Education courses, 60 per cent were employed, 18 per cent were unemployed and 22 per cent were not in the labour force. While the majority of students enrolled in these courses were employed people who were probably seeking to improve their skills in the workplace, a significant proportion of people were unemployed or not in the labour force, and were probably seeking to improve their job prospects.

- a greater proportion of unemployed participants (35 per cent)[2] were enrolled in Vocational Education courses than any other course type. This indicates the importance unemployed people place on completing courses that will give them vocational skills and help them to find work.

- over half of the ESL students were not in the labour force, with over a quarter more being unemployed. This is consistent with the finding for the discussion groups which showed that ESL was seen by many NESB people as important in allowing them to communicate better in the general community and with family members. Additionally, ESL courses were seen by unemployed migrants in the discussion groups as a means of improving their chances of finding employment.

- unemployed people were well represented amongst participants who enrolled in Adult Basic Education, making up 17 per cent of students in that course type.

- employed people made up half of participants in Access courses, while unemployed people comprised 8 per cent and persons not in the labour force made up 41 per cent This reflects the overall proportions of participants in the sample who were employed, unemployed or not in the labour force.

- unemployed participants made up only 4 per cent of participants enrolled in General Adult Education courses. The remainder of participants in this course types were equally divided between those who were employed and those who were not in the labour force (46 and 47 per cent respectively).

The findings above, relating to labour force status, suggest that ACE courses are used by people who include:

(i) employed people who are seeking to improve their qualifications and/or their skills in the workplace.

(ii) unemployed people who are seeking to improve their chances of finding work.

(iii) persons not in the labour force who are seeking the confidence or skills to possibly enter or re-enter the labour force, or to recommence their education, and

(iv) persons, regardless of their labour force status, who do courses for enjoyment, or to develop skills for a host of non vocational reasons.

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[2] 225 respondents were unemployed in 1992: of these, 79 (ie. 35 per cent) were undertaking Vocational Education courses.

TABLE 6. TYPE OF COURSE BY LABOUR FORCE STATUS AT TIME OF 1992 COURSE

Type of course	*Employed*	*Unemployed (looking for work)*	*Not employed and not seeking employment*	*Total(a)*
		NUMBER		
Adult basic education	57	25	64	150
ESL	18	33	63	117
Access	143	22	116	284
Vocational education	270	79	97	450
General adult education	610	56	624	1,314
Total(b)	1,119	225	1,001	2,388
		PER CENT		
Adult basic education	38	17	43	**100**
ESL	15	28	54	**100**
Access	50	8	41	**100**
Vocational education	60	18	22	**100**
General adult education	46	4	47	**100**
Total(b)	**47**	**9**	**42**	**100**

(a) Includes persons for whom labour force status at time of 1992 course was not stated.

(b) Includes persons for whom type of course was not stated or attended more than one course.

4.3 IMPROVEMENT IN SKILLS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

4.3.1 Introduction

The importance to Australia of developing a more skilled population has been noted in recent years in various government reports, including *Towards a Skilled Australia* (ANTA 1994). However, the role of ACE in the provision of vocational skills to the community has not been largely recognised outside of the sector. For example, many ACE providers have felt that even courses classified as non-vocational, such as General Adult Education, can bring about an improvement in a range of skills which can then be transferred into the workplace or in the pursuit of further education. However, little quantifiable data existed to establish the validity of this claim. In order to address this issue, question 10 in the questionnaire was developed in line with the seven key competencies outlined in the report *Putting General Education to Work* (the Mayer report 1992). According to Mayer, the key competencies are what young people require to prepare for work in a multi-skilled, flexible and adaptable workforce.

The eight skill categories used in the questionnaire are presented below, with the seven relevant Mayer key competencies described in italics immediately beneath these categories:

(i) language and communication skills.
(communicating ideas and information)

(ii) collecting, analysing and organising information.
(collecting, analysing and organising information)

(iii) making better use of time at work or during study.
(planning and organising activities (part 1))

(iv) becoming better able at running a household.
(planning and organising activities (part 2))

(v) learning to work better with people.
(working with others and in teams)

(vi) decision making and thinking skills.
(solving problems)

(vii) maths or numeracy skills.
(using mathematical ideas and techniques)

(viii) being able to use technology better.
(using technology)

An eighth key competency, cultural understanding, was not included on the questionnaire, because it had not been endorsed as a key competency at the time the questionnaire was developed. However, cultural understanding was a theme which emerged from the discussion groups (refer to section 5.3.7 of chapter 5).

The structure of this chapter

This section initially examines the overall improvement in skills of participants in adult and community education during 1992 and then looks at the individual key competency skills as listed above. Following this, the improvement in key competency skills in terms of the participants' labour force status is examined. The following tables[1] have been used in the analysis. Those tables prefixed with a letter 'A' can be found in the Additional tables section, which is in part two of this report. The other tables are to be found at the end of this section.

- **Table 7** shows improvements in skills by the participants' sex.
- **Table 8** shows improvements in skills by the participants' age.
- **Table 9** outlines the skills participants improved by the type of course in which they were enrolled in at 1992.
- **Table A1** outlines the skills participants improved by their highest educational qualifications at 1992.
- **Table A2** outlines the skills participants improved by the language they speak at home.
- **Table A3** outlines the skills participants improved by relationship in household.
- **Tables 10, 11 and 12** present findings for improvement in skills in terms of participants' labour force status.

In looking at the improvement to skills, it must be noted that whether an improvement occurred or not was dependent on the respondent reporting such an improvement. In this respect, their opinion may differ from tests designed to measure improvements. However, this does not detract from the findings; the perceptions of the respondent are important as they suggest the belief in an improvement of their abilities, as well as a greater confidence in using these skills. In addition, during the discussion groups, participants were often readily able to demonstrate how their improvement in skills had benefited them.

4.3.2 Overall improvement in key competency skills

Overall, 58 per cent of respondents reported they improved their skills in at least one of the key competency areas as a result of doing the adult and community education course in 1992. A further 30 per cent reported an improvement in some other type of skill, some of which may relate to the key competencies.

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[1] For some cells in the tables, less than eight people have reported improvements to their skills. Care should be taken in interpreting these figures.

The main improvements reported by participants involving key competency skills occurred with language or communication skills, collecting, organising or using information, working better with people, and decision making and thinking skills.

Course type

Improvements in key competency skills in 1992 were reported by participants across all course types, as shown in **table A4**. Improvements in key competencies were reported by:

- 94 per cent of participants in ESL courses.
- 89 per cent of participants in Adult Basic Education courses.
- 82 per cent of participants in Access courses.
- 80 per cent of participants in Vocational Education courses, and
- 39 per cent of participants in General Adult Education courses.

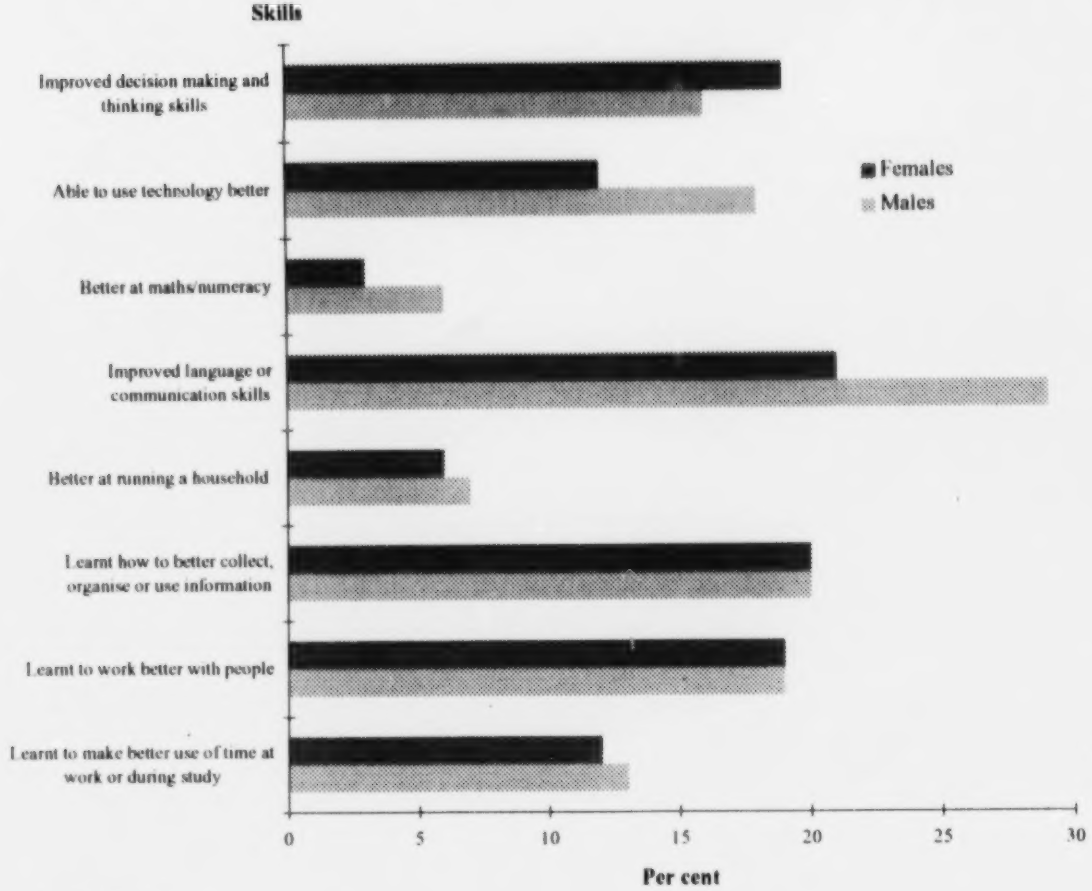
The data above appears to indicate that the greater benefits were experienced through courses designed to improve basic life skills. This is further supported by the finding that improvements in three or more key competency skills were reported by over a third of Adult Basic Education students, and a quarter of Access or ESL students.

A much higher proportion of General Adult Education students (43 per cent), compared to students from other course types, indicated that they improved 'other' skills to those listed above (see **table 9**). Some of these other skills may relate to the key competencies.

Sex

Generally, male and female participants reported much the same overall skills improvement, as shown by **graph 1** on the following page, and **table 7** at the end of this section. A slightly higher proportion of females reported improvements in their decision making and thinking skills compared to males, possibly indicating that women benefit more in the area of increasing their self-confidence while doing ACE courses. A higher proportion of males than females reported improvements in either their language and communication skills, using technology or in their maths or numeracy skills. These figures reflect the higher proportion of males enrolled in Vocational Education, Adult Basic Education and ESL courses in 1992 compared to females (see **table 1** in section 4.2.1).

GRAPH 1: IMPROVEMENT IN SKILLS BY SEX



Age groups

In five key competency skill areas, participants aged 15 to 24 years showed the greatest proportions reporting an improvement in their skills, although there was not a great deal of variation between different age groups (refer to **table 8**). These results reflect the types of courses in which people were enrolled; there was a greater proportion of 15 to 24 year olds enrolled in Vocational Education or Access courses in 1992 than any other age group.

Relationship in the household

Across all key competencies, sole parents reported improvements in skills in greater or equal proportions to the average for all participants (see **table A3**). Compared to other participants, the main areas of improvement reported by sole parents were working better with people and decision making and thinking skills. Additionally, a high proportion of sole parents reported improvements to their language or communication skills.

Non-English speaking background (NESB) participants

Table A2 shows that overall, a higher proportion of NESB participants reported improvements to their key competency skills, compared to those who spoke English only. The single major improvement for people of NESB occurred with language or communication skills (which most likely resulted from doing ESL courses). Across all key competency skills, with the exception of being able to use technology better, the proportions of NESB participants reporting an improvement in skills were comparable with participants who only spoke English at home.

Highest educational qualifications

In terms of this socio-demographic characteristic, the largest proportions of participants reporting improvements to their key competency skills occurred for those with no post-school qualifications (see **table A1**). This finding is also apparent for each type of key competency skill, apart from being able to use technology better, where similar proportions of people with or without post-school qualifications reported improvements.

Participants with a bachelor degree or higher qualifications were the group most likely to report improvements in "other skills" (that is, with non key competency skills).

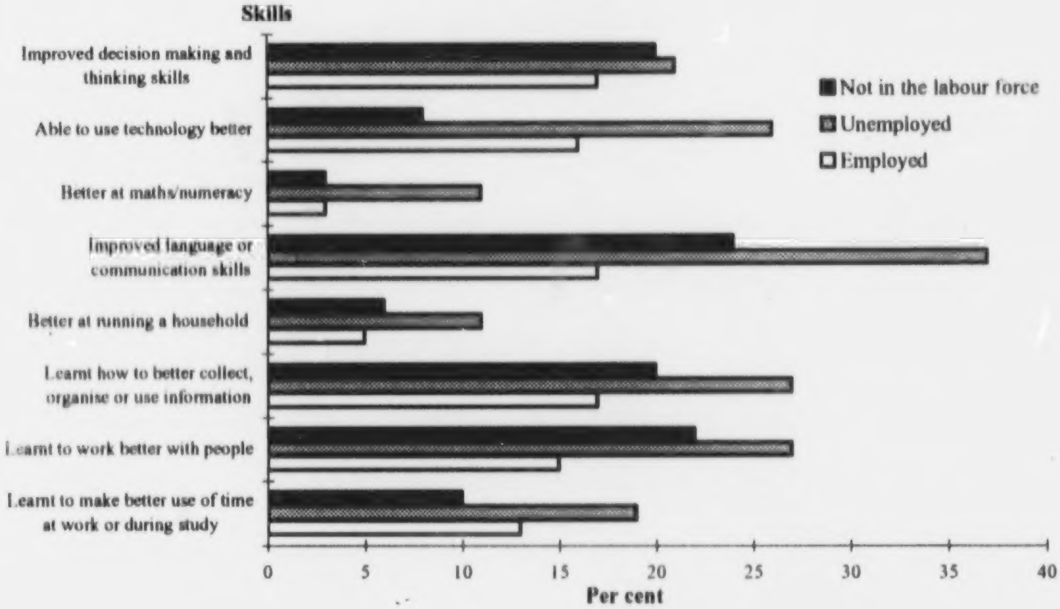
Labour force status

Table A4 shows that a higher proportion of unemployed participants reported improvements to at least one key competency skill (78 per cent), compared to those who were employed (55 per cent) or not in the labour force (59 per cent). Unemployed participants were also more likely to have improved in multiple key competency areas; a quarter of unemployed participants reported improvements in at least three key competencies, compared to 12 per cent of those who were employed and 15 per cent of those who were not in the labour force (that is; not employed and not seeking work).

The above trend was apparent across course types. For example; in General Adult Education, 29 per cent of unemployed participants reported improvements in at least three key competencies, compared to 6 per cent of those who were employed and 12 per cent who were not in the labour force

Graph 2 on the following page shows the percentages of participants who reported improvements in their key competency skills by their labour force status (see also **table 10**).

GRAPH 2: IMPROVEMENT IN SKILLS BY LABOUR FORCE STATUS AT TIME OF 1992 COURSE



4.3.3 Language and communication skills

An improvement in language or communication skills was reported by almost a quarter of 1992 participants; the highest proportion for any one key competency. This is despite the fact that only 11 per cent of respondents were enrolled in Adult Basic Education or ESL courses, which specifically aim to improve language and communication skills. This shows that other types of courses contribute to the learning of this skill.

Improvements in language or communication skills were reported by:

- 89 per cent of ESL students, almost three quarters of Adult Basic Education students and over half of Access students (see **graph 3**). However, improvements occurred across all course types; for example, 10 per cent of Vocational Education students and 8 per cent of General Adult Education students reported improvements.

- a greater proportion of male (29 per cent) compared to female participants (21 per cent).

- participants of all age groups, with the highest proportions reporting an improvement being those aged 15 to 24 years and those aged 65 years and over (both 27 per cent).

- 82 per cent of students who spoke a selected Asian language at home, compared to 46 per cent who spoke a selected European language, 17 per cent who spoke English only and 54 per cent who spoke another language.

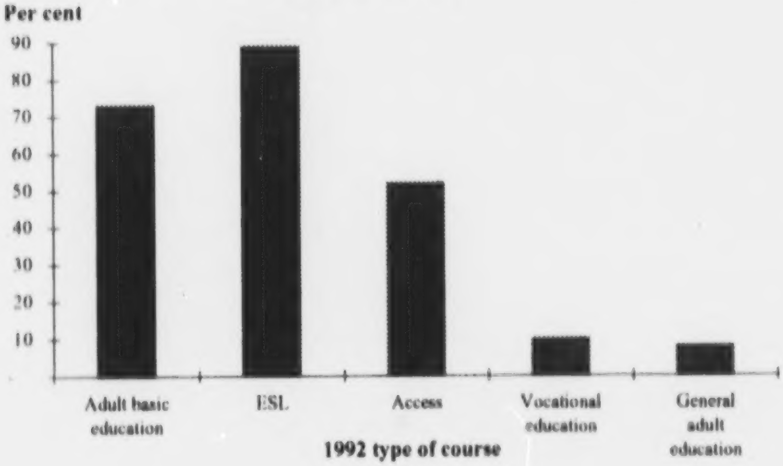
- a higher proportion of participants without a post-secondary school qualification and who either had not completed year 10 (36 per cent) or had completed year 10 only (26 per cent), compared to 18 per cent who had post-school qualifications.

- 37 per cent of unemployed participants, compared to 17 per cent of employed participants and 24 per cent of those not in the labour force.

- 41 per cent of participants who had never worked compared to a quarter of participants who were not employed but who had worked for varying lengths of time[2].

- 30 per cent of sole parents, which was higher than for people living alone, parents in a two parent family household, and people living with a partner but no children.

GRAPH 3: IMPROVED LANGUAGE/COMMUNICATION SKILLS BY TYPE OF COURSE



4.3.4 Collecting, organising and using information

This category was the equal second most reported improvement in key competency skills, involving 19 per cent of respondents who undertook an ACE course in 1992. Improvements in collecting, organising and using information were reported by:

- a third of Adult Basic Education students. This figure was the highest across all course types, with the next highest being a quarter of both Access and Vocational Education students (refer to **graph 4**).

- an equal proportion of male and female participants.

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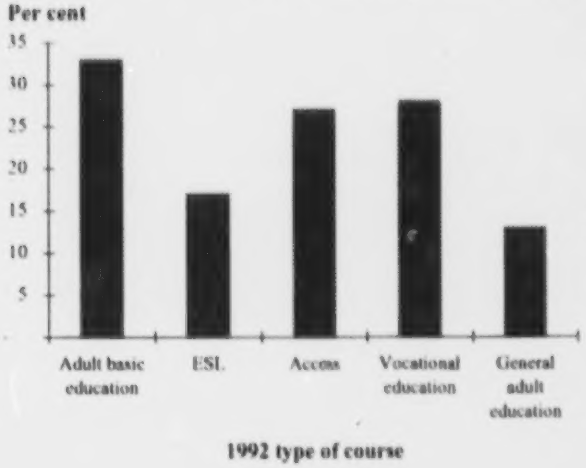
[2] Those not employed includes persons who were aged between 15 and 64 years and who were either unemployed or not in the labour force.

- participants of all age groups, although those aged 65 years or over had the lowest proportion who reported an improvement (15 per cent), while those aged 15 to 24 years had the highest proportion (24 per cent).

- a greater proportion of participants who had no post-school qualifications, compared to those who did. A quarter of people whose highest qualification was either a secondary school certificate or year 10, and 20 per cent of those who had not attained year 10, reported improvement in this skill.

- 27 per cent of unemployed participants, compared to 17 per cent of those who were employed and 20 per cent of those who were not in the labour force.

GRAPH 4: LEARNT HOW TO BETTER COLLECT, ORGANISE OR USE INFORMATION BY TYPE OF COURSE



4.3.5 Making better use of time at work or during study and becoming better at running a household

Overall, 12 per cent of participants reported being better able to use their time at work or during study after undertaking the 1992 course. 6 per cent said they became better at running a household. It was found that:

- a higher proportion of students in Access courses (25 per cent) or Adult Basic Education (17 per cent) learnt to make better use of their time at work or during study, compared to participants who did other courses. A far greater proportion of Adult Basic Education students (19 per cent) compared to other students became better at running a household.

- equal proportions of male and female participants reported improvements in these two skills.

- about a quarter of students aged 15 to 24 years reported that they learnt to make better use of their time at work or during study; a higher proportion compared to other age groups. A higher proportion of students aged 25 to 44 years (9 per cent) became better at running a household, compared to other age groups.

- a higher proportion of participants with no post-school qualifications, compared to those who did, reported improvements in these areas.
- a higher proportion of unemployed participants reported improvements to both skills, compared to other participants.
- 14 per cent of people who had never worked reported that they became better at running a household, which was a greater proportion than for other participants who were not employed[3]

4.3.6 Working better with people

This category was the equal second most reported improvement in skills (19 per cent of respondents) after undertaking the 1992 course. Improvements for this category were reported by:

- 29 per cent of Adult Basic Education students, 26 per cent of Access students and 24 per cent of ESL students. 18 per cent of General Adult Education students also learnt to work better with people, which was higher than for Vocational Education students (13 per cent).
- equal proportions of male and female participants.
- a higher proportion of participants aged 15 to 24 years (26 per cent), compared to participants of other age groups.
- a quarter of participants without post-school qualifications who had either completed or not completed year 10. This figure was higher than for other participants (see **graph 5**).
- 27 per cent of unemployed students, a significantly higher proportion compared to other students.
- a third of those who had never worked, followed by a quarter of those who had not worked for between 1 year to less than 5 years[4].
- a greater proportion of sole parents (26 per cent) compared to other participants.

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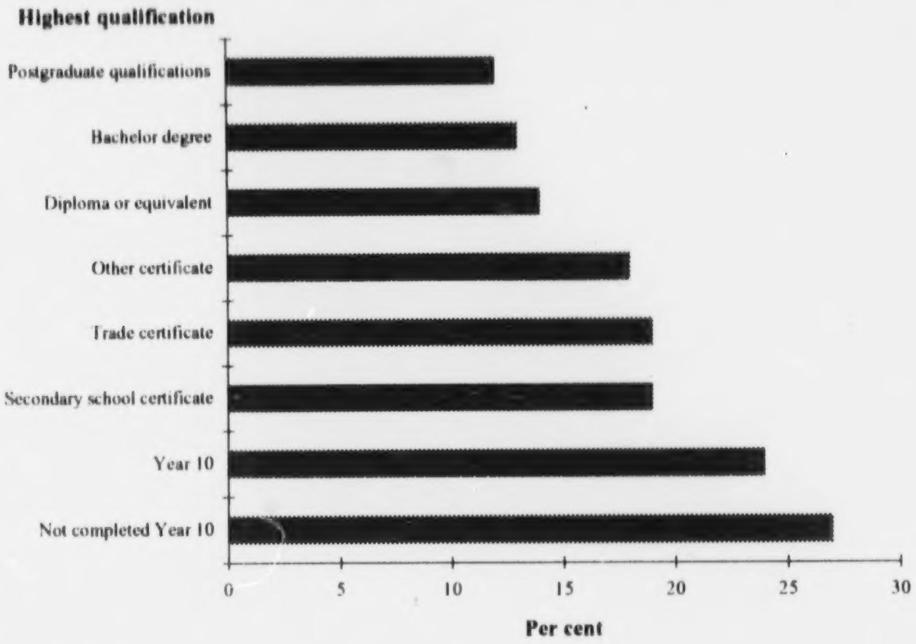
[3] As defined in footnote 2.

[4] As defined in footnote 2.

GRAPH 5: LEARNT TO WORK BETTER WITH PEOPLE BY HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION



4.3.7 Decision making and thinking skills

Overall, 18 per cent of participants reported an improvement in this skill after undertaking the course in 1992. Improvements in this skill were reported by:

- a greater proportion of students enrolled in Access courses in 1992 (32 per cent), than those in other courses. However, a relatively high proportion of Adult Basic Education students and ESL students also said they improved these skills (29 per cent and 20 per cent respectively).

- 19 per cent of female and 16 per cent of male students.

- roughly equal proportions of participants aged 15 to 64 years, while a much lower proportion of participants aged 65 years and over reported an improvement.

- a higher proportion of those who did not have a post-school qualification (21 per cent), compared to those who had some form of post-school qualification.

- a slightly higher proportion of participants who were either unemployed (21 per cent) or not in the labour force (20 per cent), compared to those who were employed (17 per cent).

- 28 per cent of participants who had not worked for three years or more, compared to 19 per cent of participants who had not worked for less than 3 years[5].

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[5] As defined in footnote 2.

- a greater proportion of sole parents (24 per cent) compared to other participants.

4.3.8 Maths and numeracy skills

Overall, 4 per cent of participants reported an improvement in this skill after undertaking the 1992 course. The improvements for this key competency was reported by:

- a much higher proportion of Adult Basic Education students (19 per cent), than participants in other course types. The next highest proportion was 7 per cent, reported by ESL participants.

- a greater proportion of male compared to female participants (6 per cent and 3 per cent respectively).

- younger people. The data shows a progression downwards from 7 per cent of participants aged 15 to 24 improving these skills to 2 per cent for those aged 55 years or over.

- a higher proportion of participants who spoke a language other than English at home, compared to those who spoke English only.

- those who had no post-school qualification and who either had not reached year 10 (7 per cent) or who had reached year 10 (5 per cent), compared to other participants.

- a much higher proportion of students who were unemployed (11 per cent), compared to employed students or students not in the labour force.

4.3.9 Using technology better

Overall, 13 per cent of participants reported an improvement in this skill after undertaking the 1992 course. Improvements in the ability to use technology were reported by:

- a higher proportion of Vocational Education students (52 per cent); a much greater proportion than for students enrolled in other course types.

- a greater proportion of male (18 per cent) than female participants (12 per cent). This partly reflects the types of courses in which males and females were enrolled in at 1992. For example, as a proportion of the total sample, more males than females were enrolled in Vocational Education courses.

- 18 per cent of students aged 35 to 44 years (the highest proportion of any age group), followed by 15 to 24 year olds (15 per cent). This suggests that students are either trying to gain skills to improve their job prospects or are trying to ensure that they are able to keep up with technological changes either in the workplace or in other situations.

- 14 per cent of those who spoke English only, a higher figure compared to those who spoke another language at home. This reflects the fact that a higher proportion of participants who spoke English only did Vocational Education courses.

- similar proportions of participants with varying educational qualifications.

- 26 per cent of unemployed people, 16 per cent of employed people and 8 per cent of those not in the labour force. This possibly indicates the importance unemployed people place on learning about new technology as a possible means of finding work.

- a higher proportion who were not employed and who had not worked for less than 1 year (21 per cent)[6], compared to other students.

4.3.10 Key findings

The participants who improved their skills the most were generally those who belonged to disadvantaged groups in the community. Those who experienced the most notable improvements to their skills included: unemployed people, young people, people who have never worked (who may experience isolation in the community), sole parents and those without post-school qualifications. Significant improvements also occurred in some key competencies for NESB people and women. However, as these two groups are not well represented in Vocational Education or Access courses, their skill improvements in some skill areas, such as being able to use technology better, was not as pronounced as in others.

Of particular interest are the findings for unemployed persons. A significantly higher proportion of unemployed participants reported improvement in at least one key competency skill, compared to participants who were either employed or not in the labour force. Further to this, it appears that unemployed participants report a high level of skill improvement, across the range of key competency skills, regardless of the type of course they undertook.

Overall, the types of key competency skills reported were often dependent on the type of course undertaken. Language and communication skills were much more likely to be reported by participants in ESL, Adult Basic Education and Access courses. An improved ability to use technology was much more likely to be reported by participants in Vocational Education. However, an improvement in key competency skills was reported by many participants who were enrolled in courses where the teaching of those skills is not seen as an objective. For example, significant proportions of General Adult Education participants reported improving their skills, particularly in regards to working better with people, decision making and thinking and in learning how to better collect, organise or use information.

These findings have established that ACE plays a significant part in improving the key competency skills of the community, particularly those in disadvantaged groups, and that these skills are learnt from participating in a range of courses, not merely those relating to Vocational Education.

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[6] As defined in footnote 2.

TABLE 7. IMPROVEMENT IN SKILLS RESULTING FROM 1992 COURSE BY SEX

	Number			*Per cent*		
Improvement in skills(a)	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons(b)*	*Males*	*Females*	*Total(b)*
I learnt to make better use of my time at work or during study	59	232	291	13	12	12
I learnt to work better with people	91	361	459	19	19	19
I learnt how to better collect or organise or use information	92	369	465	20	20	19
I became better at running a household (eg. budgeting, organising household tasks)	33	105	142	7	6	6
I improved my language or communication skills	137	387	529	29	21	22
I learnt to do better at maths/numeracy	30	54	85	6	3	4
I was able to use technology better	83	227	311	18	12	13
I improved my decision making and thinking skills	76	360	441	16	19	18
Other skills learnt	134	565	710	29	30	30
Course did not help improve my skills	36	138	176	8	7	7
Total	**468**	**1,875**	**2,388**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) Components may not add to total as more than one skill may have been gained.
(b) Includes persons for whom sex was not stated.

TABLE 8. IMPROVEMENT IN SKILLS RESULTING FROM 1992 COURSE BY AGE GROUP (YEARS)

Improvement in skills(a)	*15-24*	*25-34*	*35-44*	*45-54*	*55-64*	*65+*	*Total(b)*
				NUMBER			
I learnt to make better use of my time at work or during study	40	53	80	57	30	30	291
I learnt to work better with people	43	83	125	82	75	49	459
I learnt how to better collect or organise or use information	40	83	122	91	81	44	465
I became better at running a household (eg. budgeting, organising household tasks)	9	37	46	27	13	9	142
I improved my language or communication skills	44	78	116	126	81	78	529
I learnt to do better at maths/numeracy	11	19	24	18	8	5	85
I was able to use technology better	25	44	109	72	39	19	311
I improved my decision making and thinking skills	36	65	131	97	77	30	441
Other skills learnt	56	158	196	145	89	60	710
Course did not help improve my skills	10	33	52	42	18	20	176
Total	**164**	**399**	**611**	**519**	**366**	**293**	**2,388**
				PER CENT			
I learnt to make better use of my time at work or during study	24	13	13	11	8	10	12
I learnt to work better with people	26	21	20	16	20	17	19
I learnt how to better collect or organise or use information	24	21	20	18	22	15	19
I became better at running a household (eg. budgeting, organising household tasks)	5	9	8	5	4	3	6
I improved my language or communication skills	27	20	19	24	22	27	22
I learnt to do better at maths/numeracy	7	5	4	3	2	2	4
I was able to use technology better	15	11	18	14	11	6	13
I improved my decision making and thinking skills	22	16	21	19	21	10	18
Other skills learnt	34	40	32	28	24	20	30
Course did not help improve my skills	6	8	9	8	5	7	7
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) Components may not add to total as more than one skill may have been gained.

(b) Includes persons for whom age was not stated.

TABLE 9. IMPROVEMENT IN SKILLS RESULTING FROM 1992 COURSE BY TYPE OF COURSE

Improvement in skills(a)	*Adult basic education*	*ESL*	*Access*	*Vocational education*	*General adult education*	*Total(b)*
			NUMBER			
I learnt to make better use of my time at work or during study	25	13	70	62	107	291
I learnt to work better with people	44	28	75	58	234	459
I learnt how to better collect or organise or use information	50	20	77	128	176	465
I became better at running a household (eg. budgeting, organising household tasks)	28	9	18	27	57	142
I improved my language or communication skills	109	104	149	43	107	529
I learnt to do better at maths/numeracy	29	8	6	22	17	85
I was able to use technology better	12	8	21	232	32	311
I improved my decision making and thinking skills	44	23	91	75	189	441
Other skills	12	6	44	74	562	710
Course did not help improve my skills	8	4	10	33	119	176
Total	**150**	**117**	**284**	**450**	**1,314**	**2,388**
			PER CENT			
I learnt to make better use of my time at work or during study	17	11	25	14	8	12
I learnt to work better with people	29	24	26	13	18	19
I learnt how to better collect or organise or use information	33	17	27	28	13	19
I became better at running a household (eg. budgeting, organising household tasks)	19	8	6	6	4	6
I improved my language or communication skills	73	89	52	10	8	22
I learnt to do better at maths/numeracy	19	7	2	5	1	4
I was able to use technology better	8	7	7	52	2	13
I improved my decision making and thinking skills	29	20	32	17	14	18
Other skills	8	5	15	16	43	30
Course did not help improve my skills	5	3	4	7	9	7
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) Components may not add to total as more than one skill may have been gained.
(b) Includes persons for whom type of course was unknown or who attended more than one course.

TABLE 10. IMPROVEMENT IN SKILLS RESULTING FROM 1992 COURSE BY LABOUR FORCE STATUS AT TIME OF 1992 COURSE

Improvement in skills(a)	*Employed*	*Unemployed (looking for work)*	*Not employed and not seeking employment*	*Total(b)*
		NUMBER		
I learnt to make better use of my time at work or during study	144	43	100	291
I learnt to work better with people	168	61	221	459
I learnt how to better collect or organise or use information	195	60	205	465
I became better at running a household (eg. budgeting, organising household tasks)	51	24	65	142
I improved my language or communication skills	194	84	243	529
I learnt to do better at maths/ numeracy	33	24	27	85
I was able to use technology better	174	58	77	311
I improved my decision making and thinking skills	185	47	202	441
Other skills learnt	392	42	272	710
Course did not help improve my skills	75	15	86	176
Total	**1,119**	**225**	**1,001**	**2,388**
		PER CENT		
I learnt to make better use of my time at work or during study	13	19	10	12
I learnt to work better with people	15	27	22	19
I learnt how to better collect or organise or use information	17	27	20	19
I became better at running a household (eg. budgeting, organising household tasks)	5	11	6	6
I improved my language or communication skills	17	37	24	22
I learnt to do better at maths/ numeracy	3	11	3	4
I was able to use technology better	16	26	8	13
I improved my decision making and thinking skills	17	21	20	18
Other skills learnt	35	19	27	30
Course did not help improve my skills	7	7	9	7
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) Components may not add to total as more than one skill may have been gained.

(b) Includes persons for whom labour force status at time of 1992 course was not stated.

TABLE 11. PERSONS AGED BETWEEN 15 - 64 YEARS WHO WERE NOT EMPLOYED(a) AT TIME OF 1992 COURSE : IMPROVEMENT IN SKILLS RESULTING FROM COURSE BY LENGTH OF TIME SINCE LAST WORKED

Improvement in skills(b)	*Less than 1 year*	*1 - less than 2 years*	*2 - less than 3 years*	*3 - less than 5 years*	*5 years or more*	*Has never worked*	*Total(c)*
				NUMBER			
I learnt to make better use of my time at work or during study	23	12	11	10	36	17	116
I learnt to work better with people	35	27	19	23	85	36	236
I learnt how to better collect or organise or use information	36	20	22	20	92	16	222
I became better at running a household (eg. budgeting, organising household tasks)	10	6	4	5	32	16	79
I improved my language or communication skills	29	27	30	26	81	45	255
I learnt to do better at maths/numeracy	8	6	2	6	13	8	47
I was able to use technology better	33	9	9	10	39	9	118
I improved my decision making and thinking skills	28	21	17	23	103	13	219
Other skills	55	37	21	22	98	12	258
Course did not help improve my skills	15	13	5	7	27	13	82
Total	**157**	**107**	**86**	**93**	**352**	**111**	**960**
				PER CENT			
I learnt to make better use of my time at work or during study	15	11	13	11	10	15	12
I learnt to work better with people	22	25	22	25	24	32	25
I learnt how to better collect or organise or use information	23	19	26	22	26	14	23
I became better at running a household (eg. budgeting, organising household tasks)	6	6	5	5	9	14	8
I improved my language or communication skills	18	25	35	28	23	41	27
I learnt to do better at maths/numeracy	5	6	2	6	4	7	5
I was able to use technology better	21	8	10	11	11	8	12
I improved my decision making and thinking skills	18	20	20	25	29	12	23
Other skills	35	35	24	24	28	11	27
Course did not help improve my skills	10	12	6	8	8	12	9
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) Those not employed includes persons who were aged between 15 and 64 years and who were either unemployed or not in the labour force.

(b) Components may not add to total as more than one skill may have been gained.

(c) Includes persons for whom length of time since last worked was not stated.

TABLE 12. NUMBER OF KEY COMPETENCIES IMPROVED BY LABOUR FORCE STATUS AT TIME OF 1992 COURSE

Number of key competencies improved(a)	*Employed*	*Unemployed (looking for work)*	*Not employed and not seeking employment*	***Total(b)***
		NUMBER		
None	507	49	415	995
One	359	87	319	773
Two	115	35	119	274
Three-four	99	28	108	240
More than four	39	26	40	106
Total	**1,119**	**225**	**1,001**	**2,388**
		PER CENT		
None	45	22	41	42
One	32	39	32	32
Two	10	16	12	11
Three-four	9	12	11	10
More than four	3	12	4	4
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) Key competency skills are categories (a) - (h) in question 10 of the questionnaire. The 'other skills' category is **not** included in this table. The 'other skills' category may or may not have included key competency skills.

(b) Includes persons for whom labour force status at time of 1992 course was not stated.

4.4 EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES AND PATHWAYS

4.4.1 Introduction

This section examines two issues. The first relates to the role of ACE in seeking to assist participants achieve educational outcomes and pathways through the sector's Access and Adult Basic Education programs. The second issue is whether doing other types of ACE courses also lead participants to seek other educational options, as is believed by many ACE providers. This section presents the findings on these two issues under four headings:

(i) the educational outcomes which occurred after completing the ACE course.

(ii) pathways leading to further education after completing the ACE course.

(iii) the pathways leading to doing more ACE courses, and

(iv) how helpful participants found ACE courses overall.

For this section, the tables used for this analysis are listed under these headings.

Educational outcomes were measured in question 8 by asking the participant whether they were assisted either:

(i) to prepare for study at a tertiary institution,

(ii) with the studies they were doing at the time, or

(iii) to prepare for another ACE course.

Educational pathways occurred when the ACE participants either went on to study for an educational qualification (including year 10 level) or did additional ACE courses.

When examining the data presented, some care needs to be taken in associating particular outcomes and pathways with enrolment in ACE or in particular types of courses. For example, if a person began studying towards an educational qualification after commencing the 1992 ACE course, it cannot be concluded that the ACE course resulted in that person undertaking that study. There may have been a number of other reasons for this outcome. However, the link between doing an ACE course and going on to do further education cannot be discounted either, even as a contributory reason.

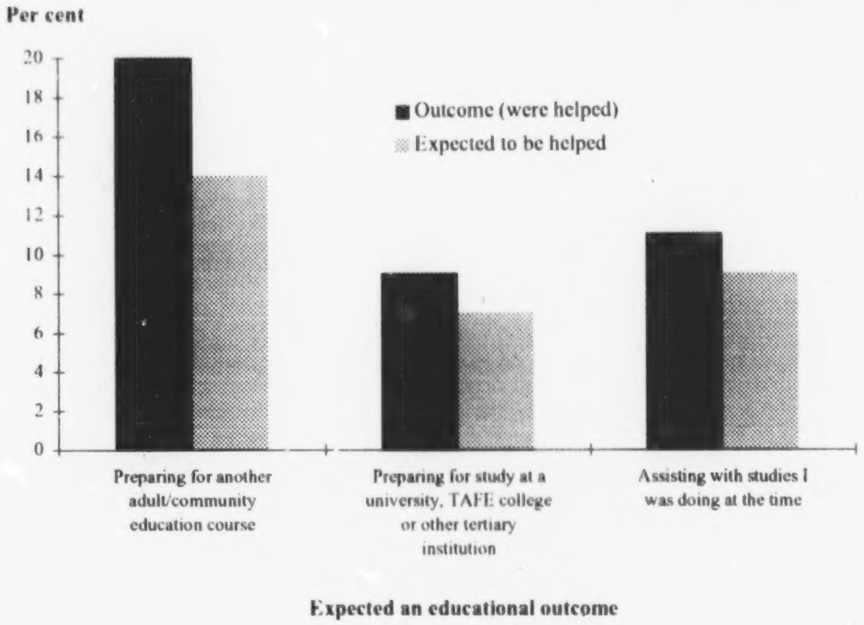
4.4.2 Overall outcomes and pathways

ACE can contribute to educational outcomes in two ways; either a participant undertakes an ACE course expecting to be assisted with any of the three outcomes listed above (and are assisted in this regard), or the participant undertakes the ACE course not expecting to be assisted with such an outcome but, in fact, finds the course subsequently does assist them in achieving an educational outcome. These two factors are shown in **table 13** at the back of this section. Overall, 7 per cent of all ACE participants in 1992 had an expectation of the course being able to prepare them for study at a tertiary institution, 9 per cent expected the course to assist with studies they were doing at the time and 14 per cent expected to prepare for undertaking another ACE course[1].

As **table 13** indicates, there were more participants who were assisted in achieving an educational outcome when they had not expected to be assisted, compared to those who had expected to be assisted but who were not assisted. The result is that, overall, 9 per cent of ACE participants in 1992 believed that the ACE course had assisted them in being able to prepare for study at a tertiary institution, 11 per cent were assisted with the studies they were doing at the time and 20 per cent were assisted to prepare for another ACE course (as shown in **graph 6**).

In terms of educational pathways undertaken by 1992 ACE participants, overall, 347 participants (15 per cent of all participants) went on to study towards some type of formal qualification. In addition to this, 1,021 participants (42 per cent of all participants) went on to do additional ACE courses.

GRAPH 6: EDUCATIONAL EXPECTATIONS BY OUTCOMES



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[1] Note that the proportion of people **expecting** to be helped is calculated by adding together the categories 'expected to be helped and were' and 'expected to be helped and were not'. The proportion who **were helped** was calculated by adding together the categories 'expected to be helped and were' and 'did not expect to be helped and were'. Percentages only are presented in table 13, thus all of the figures presented in this analysis cannot be calculated exactly from this table.

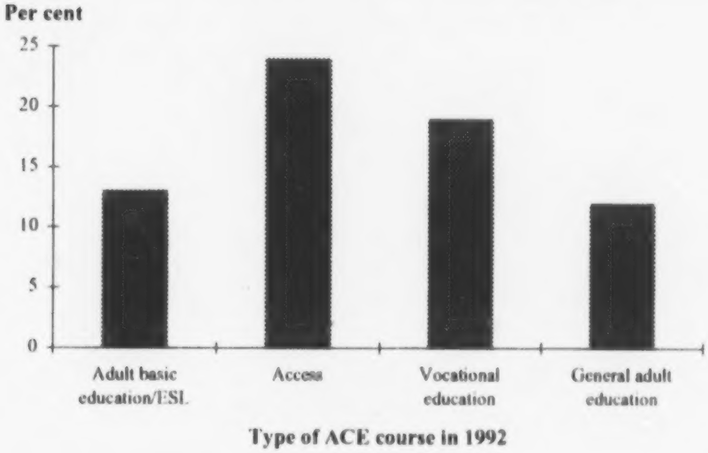
Course type

Each of the three educational outcomes (listed in the introduction to this section) were experienced to a similar extent by participants across each course type, with the exception of those who did General Adult Education, who reported much fewer outcomes (refer to **table 14**). Most of the Adult Basic Education and ESL students who experienced an outcome were assisted to prepare for further ACE courses. Participants who did Access or Vocational Education courses were more evenly spread across the three educational outcomes, although the most common outcome was preparing for another ACE course.

Of the participants who did an Access course in 1992, 24 per cent subsequently went on to study towards a qualification. The corresponding figures for other course types were: 19 per cent of Vocational Education participants, 13 per cent of Adult Basic Education or ESL participants and 12 per cent of General Adult Education students (refer to **graph 7**).

The largest proportions of participants across each course type in 1992, who returned to do more ACE courses, did the same course types. A low proportion of ESL or Adult Basic Education participants went on to do Vocational Education courses.

GRAPH 7: STUDENTS WHO STARTED STUDYING TOWARDS A QUALIFICATION* AFTER THE 1992 COURSE



*Includes Year 10 and Year 12

Sex

A higher proportion of males reported some type of educational outcome as compared to females (see **table A5** in the Additional tables section). While equal proportions said that they were assisted in preparing for study at a tertiary institution, the proportion of males exceeded females for the other two outcome categories.

The data on pathways shows a different pattern. Although a smaller proportion of females reported some form of educational outcome, a higher proportion of female ACE participants in 1992 (15 per cent) reported going on to study towards a qualification compared to male participants (12 per cent).

Age groups

Table A6 in the Additional tables section indicates that participants aged 15 to 24 years were more likely to have reported an educational outcome, compared to students of other age groups. Students aged 35 to 44 years were the second most likely to have been assisted. In particular, participants aged 15 to 24 years were much more likely than those of any other age group to have been assisted either in preparing for study at a tertiary institution, or with studies they were doing at the time. This indicates that a higher proportion of ACE participants at the younger age group are seeking to continue to study towards some type of qualification. Participants aged 35 to 44 were probably seeking to upgrade their skills or qualifications for use in the workplace.

Non-English speaking background (NESB) participants

For each of the three educational outcomes, NESB participants had a higher proportion who were assisted by doing the 1992 ACE course, compared to English speaking participants (unpublished data). In particular, NESB participants who were in ESL classes had relatively high percentages who were assisted either in preparing for another ACE course, or with the studies they were doing, compared to other students.

Despite the above, a relatively low percentage of NESB participants in ESL courses (13 per cent) went on to study towards a qualification after completing the 1992 course. In regards to the completing of further ACE courses after 1992, a high proportion of ESL students returned to do more ESL classes or reading and writing, however relatively few sought to undertake other course types.

Labour force status

A much higher proportion of students who were unemployed at 1992 reported each of the three educational outcomes, compared to other students.

About 20 per cent of unemployed participants went on to study towards an educational qualification after 1992, compared to 17 per cent of those who were employed and 11 per cent who were not in the labour force (unpublished data). This indicates that ACE courses may be a pathway to the formal education system by unemployed people, in particular, who are seeking to increase their skills and qualifications to improve their chances of obtaining work.

The qualifications undertaken by ACE participants

Table A7 in the Additional tables section in part two of this report shows the types of qualifications studied towards after completing the 1992 ACE course. 70 per cent of those who went on to study towards a qualification sought to obtain a post-school qualification. A further 15 per cent studied towards obtaining a secondary school certificate[2].

4.4.3 Educational outcomes after completing the ACE course

As stated in the introduction, educational outcomes were measured in question 8 by asking respondents whether the 1992 ACE course assisted them either to prepare for study at an university, TAFE college or other tertiary institution, with studies they were doing at the time, or to prepare for another ACE course. The analysis of data below involves the following three tables. The tables prefixed with a letter 'A' can be found in the Additional tables section in part two of this report. The other table can be found at the end of this section.

- **Table 14** shows educational outcomes of participants by the type of course in which they were enrolled in at 1992.
- **Table A5** presents the educational outcomes of participants by sex, and
- **Table A6** outlines educational outcomes of participants by age.

Preparing for further study at a tertiary institution

Overall, 9 per cent of participants who completed an ACE course in 1992 reported being assisted to prepare for study at a tertiary institution. A breakdown of the ACE participants who experienced this type of outcome reveals that:

- a relatively high proportion (21 per cent) of participants who did an Access course, experienced this type of outcome, as would be expected. However, 14 per cent of Vocational Education students also reported this outcome.
- 39 were males and 172 were females. This is equivalent to 8 per cent of male and 9 per cent of female participants. The similar proportions of males and females reflects the proportions of males and females enrolled in Access courses; the courses most likely to lead to this type of educational outcome.
- a quarter were aged 15 to 24 years, which was by far the highest proportion who reported being assisted. The next highest proportions were: 11 per cent of those aged 35 to 44 years and 10 per cent of those aged 25 to 34 years.

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[2] As described in footnote (b) to table A7, the data for persons who undertook 'other certificates' should be treated with caution. Also, some of those who studied towards an 'other qualification' may have studied towards a post-school qualification.

- 12 per cent spoke a language other than English at home, compared to 8 per cent who only spoke English (unpublished data).

- 16 per cent were unemployed, compared to 9 per cent who were employed and 7 per cent who were not in the labour force (unpublished data).

Assist with studies being undertaken at the time of the 1992 ACE course

About 11 per cent of ACE participants in 1992 reported being assisted with the studies they were doing at the time. The respondents who reported this form of assistance included:

- 20 per cent of participants who completed an Adult Basic Education course.

- 15 per cent of male and 10 per cent of female participants.

- a quarter of 15 to 24 year old participants. This reflects the higher proportion of 15 to 24 year olds enrolled in Access courses compared to other age groups. The next highest proportion was 13 per cent of those aged 35 to 44 years.

- a higher proportion of NESB respondents (17 per cent), compared to those who only spoke English at home (10 per cent) (unpublished data).

- 19 per cent of unemployed participants, 11 per cent of those who were employed and 9 per cent of those who were not in the labour force (unpublished data).

Preparing for another ACE course

Overall, 20 per cent of ACE participants in 1992 were assisted to prepare for further ACE courses. The respondents who reported this form of assistance included:

- a greater proportion of male (23 per cent) than female (19 per cent) participants.

- similar proportions of participants across all age groups, apart from those aged 65 years or over which had the lowest proportion.

- high proportions of people who were enrolled in Adult Basic Education or ESL courses (both at 37 per cent).

- 33 per cent of NESB participants, compared to 17 per cent of those who spoke English only at home. A greater proportion of participants who spoke selected Asian languages (ie. Chinese and Vietnamese) reported this outcome, compared to students speaking other languages (unpublished data).

- 39 per cent of unemployed participants, 17 per cent of those who were employed and 19 per cent who were not in the labour force (unpublished data).

4.4.4 Pathways leading to further education after completing the ACE course

Educational pathways were determined by asking participants whether, after completing the 1992 ACE course, they had either started studying towards any educational qualifications (question 23) or had completed any additional ACE courses (questions 12 and 13). This part of the analysis deals with the first of these pathways and involves the examination of the following two tables[3]. The table prefixed with a letter 'A' can be found in the Additional tables section in part two of this report. The other table appears at the end of this section.

- **Table 15** shows qualifications studied towards by the type of ACE course completed in 1992, and
- **Table A7** outlines the qualifications that participants started studying towards, by sex.

The data shows that 347 people (15 per cent of respondents) went on to study towards some form of formal qualification, including a secondary school certificate or year 10, after completing the 1992 ACE course. Studying towards a qualification was a pathway for:

- a greater proportion of Access students (24 per cent) compared to students enrolled in other course types (refer to **graph 7**).
- a higher proportion of female (15 per cent) than male participants (12 per cent).
- 20 per cent of unemployed participants, compared to 17 per cent of those who were employed and 11 per cent who were not in the labour force (unpublished data).

Almost a quarter of the 347 who went on to do some further study went on to study towards a bachelor degree or higher qualification, while almost half studied towards some other form of post-school qualification[4]. A breakdown of the characteristics of participants who went on to study towards a secondary school certificate or a bachelor degree or higher qualification are given below.

Those who studied towards a secondary school certificate

Of the 347 participants who went on to do some form of further study, 15 per cent studied towards a secondary school certificate. The findings indicate that:

- of Access students who went on to study towards a qualification, a third studied towards a secondary school certificate. This compares to about a quarter of Adult Basic Education or ESL students who went on to do further study and less than 10 per cent of those in Vocational Education or General Adult Education (refer to **graph 8**).

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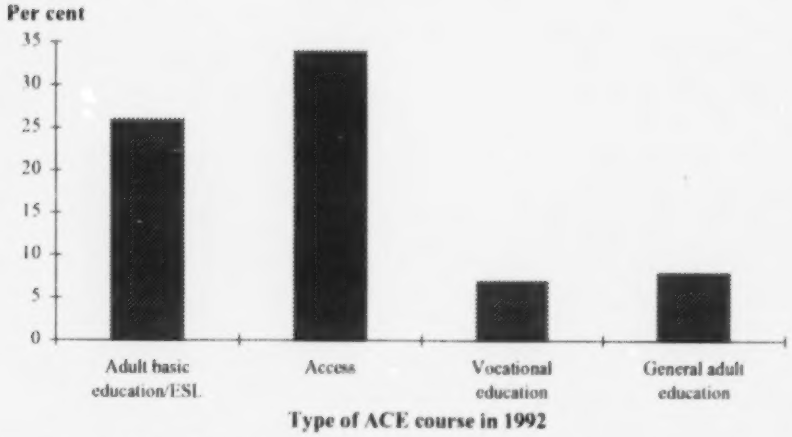
[3] For some cells in the tables, less than eight people have reported educational pathways. Care should be taken in interpreting these figures.

[4] See footnote 2.

- a higher proportion of females who went on to study towards a qualification studied towards obtaining a secondary school certificate, compared to males (17 per cent compared to 5 per cent). This corresponds to 49 females and 3 males.

GRAPH 8: STUDENTS WHO STARTED STUDYING TOWARDS A SECONDARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE AFTER THE 1992 COURSE*



*As a percentage of those students who went on to study towards a qualification after the 1992 course

Bachelor degree or higher qualifications

Of the participants who went on to do some form of study towards a qualification, 16 per cent began studying towards a bachelor degree, while 8 per cent went on to study towards a postgraduate qualification. The findings indicate that:

- of the 67 Access students who went on to study towards a qualification, 22 per cent began studying towards a bachelor degree, compared to between 9 and 16 per cent of students enrolled in other course types who went on to study towards a qualification. This indicates that Access courses are achieving their goals in giving ACE applicants a 'second chance' at gaining educational qualifications.

- 18 per cent of males and 15 per cent of females who went on to study towards a qualification studied towards a bachelor degree.

- of those General Adult Education and Access students who went on to study towards a qualification, the same proportion (10 per cent for both) studied towards a postgraduate qualification. This possibly reflects the fact that General Adult Education students were generally more qualified than the students who undertook other types of courses.

- equal proportions of males and females who went on to study towards a qualification studied towards a postgraduate qualification.

4.4.5 Pathways leading to doing more ACE courses

This part of the analysis deals with the second educational pathway available to ACE students: pathways to doing more ACE courses. The analysis for this pathway involves the examination of the following two tables[5]. The table prefixed with a letter 'A' can be found in the Additional tables section in part two of this report. The other table appears at the end of this section.

- **Table A8** shows the types of ACE courses completed since 1992 by sex, and
- **Table 16** outlines the ACE courses completed since 1992 by the type of course in which participants were enrolled in at 1992.

Of the total sample, 158 males and 848 females went on to do further ACE courses after completing the 1992 ACE course. This corresponds to 34 per cent of male participants and 45 per cent of female participants. Further examination of people who pursued this pathway reveals that:

- they were fairly evenly spread across the different types of courses attended in 1992: 48 per cent of Access students, 44 per cent of General Adult Education students, 41 per cent of ESL students, 40 per cent of Vocational Educational students and 37 per cent of Adult Basic Education students pursued further ACE courses.
- the three most popular types of courses undertaken after completing the 1992 course involved 'skills and crafts for general interest (eg. creative writing, knitting)', followed by 'skills and crafts for use in your job/preferred job', then 'general study on topics of interest (eg. history, philosophy, social sciences)'.
- there was a strong tendency for unemployed participants to have done a further ACE course which assisted them to look for a further job (35 per cent), develop skills and crafts for use in a job/preferred job (27 per cent), or to develop 'life' skills such as ESL (17 per cent), reading and writing (17 per cent) or maths or numeracy (9 per cent) (unpublished data).

The pathways of participants who returned to do further ACE courses are examined below.

Students who went on to do English as a Second Language (ESL) courses

A slightly greater proportion of males who completed further ACE courses (7 per cent) went on to study an ESL course compared to females who completed further ACE courses (5 per cent). This reflects the proportions who did ESL courses during 1992.

Overall, 48 (or 41 per cent of) ESL students in 1992 went on to complete additional ACE courses after 1992. 71 per cent of the 48 went on to study another ESL course. This indicates that ESL students sought to build on their English language skills, rather than do other types of ACE courses.

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[5] For some cells in these tables, less than eight people have reported educational pathways. Care should be taken in interpreting these figures.

Students who went on to learn reading and writing; maths and numeracy

This form of study is mostly associated with Adult Basic Education, although many obtained this type of benefit from doing ESL classes. In fact, a higher number and proportion of ESL students reported going on to study reading and writing after 1992, compared to Adult Basic Education students. Of the 48 ESL students who completed further ACE courses after 1992, 56 per cent went on to build on their skills by studying reading and writing.

Of the 55 Adult Basic Education students who completed further ACE courses after 1992, a third went on to study reading and writing and a quarter went on to study maths or numeracy. This indicates that these students returned to do more Adult Basic Education courses with the aim of building on their skills rather than seeking to do other course types.

A greater percentage of males than females undertook these types of courses after completing the 1992 course. Of the males completing further ACE courses, 10 per cent studied reading and writing and 5 per cent studied maths or numeracy. For females, the corresponding figures were 6 per cent who studied reading and writing, and 3 per cent who studied maths or numeracy. This reflects the higher proportion of males who undertook Adult Basic Education or ESL courses in 1992.

Students who went on to learn skills and crafts for general interest

This category corresponds closely with General Adult Education courses.

Of the 848 females who did further ACE courses, half went on to study skills and crafts for general interest, compared to just over a quarter of the 158 males. This reflects the higher proportion of females who did General Adult Education courses in 1992.

A greater proportion of General Adult Education students and Adult Basic Education students went on to study skills and crafts for general interest compared to other students. About 59 per cent of the General Adult Education students and 36 per cent of the Adult Basic Education students who completed further ACE courses after 1992 went on to study these skills or skills.

Students who went on to learn skills or crafts for use in a job/preferred job

Learning these skills is generally associated with Vocational Education. Of females completing further ACE courses after the 1992 course, 20 per cent went on to study skills or crafts for use in their job/preferred jobs, compared to 18 per cent of the males. This is despite the fact that a higher proportion of males did Vocational Education courses in 1992 and suggests that there is a proportion of females who are seeking to improve their job/preferred job skills through undertaking courses such as in General Adult Education, rather than Vocational Education courses.

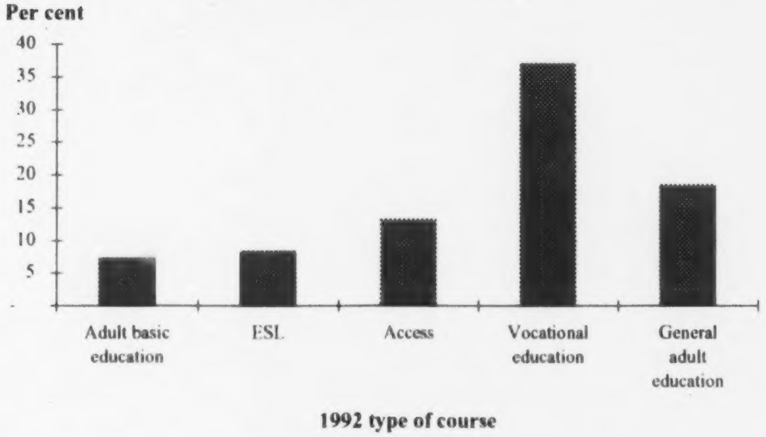
Of the 181 Vocational Education students who did further ACE courses after 1992, 37 per cent went on to study skills or crafts for use in their job/preferred job. This suggests that these participants are seeking to build upon the skills they learnt.

Of the 573 General Adult Education students who did further ACE courses after 1992, 18 per cent went on to study skills or crafts for use in their job/preferred job, compared to 13 per cent of Access participants, 8 per cent of ESL participants and 7 per cent of Adult Basic Education participants who did further ACE courses (refer to **graph 9**).

The low proportion of ESL students which went on to do learn skills or crafts for use in a job/preferred job probably indicates that many returned to do ACE courses to further improve their English skills. Many of these would be migrants who were either not in the labour force or unemployed.

Although a higher proportion of Vocational Education students than General Adult Education students went on to study skills or crafts for use in their job/preferred job, in terms of actual numbers, there were more 1992 General Adult Education students than Vocational Education students who studied these skills. Of the 202 persons who did courses after 1992 to learn skills and crafts for their job/preferred job, only 67 (33 per cent) did Vocational Education courses in 1992, compared to 106 (52 per cent) who did General Adult Education, and 26 (13 per cent) who did other courses. These figures reflect the greater number of participants who were enrolled in General Adult Education courses in 1992, compared to other course types.

GRAPH 9: STUDENTS WHO WENT ON TO DO MORE ACE COURSES AFTER 1992: LEARNING SKILLS OR CRAFTS FOR USE IN A JOB/PREFERRED JOB*



*As a percentage of those students who went on to do further ACE courses after the 1992 ACE course

Students who went on to do courses to help them look for a job

Learning skills to look for a job is generally associated with Vocational Education. Of the total number of people who went on to do further ACE courses after 1992, 9 per cent completed courses to help them look for a job. The proportions were the same for males and females. As noted for participants who learnt skills or crafts for use in a job/preferred job, this finding further suggests that numbers of females are improving their job related skills through undertaking types of courses other than Vocational Education. Findings from the discussion groups suggest that a proportion of these women could be involved in 'cottage industry' activities (eg. earning money from skills learnt in sewing or calligraphy classes).

Of 181 Vocational Education students and 48 ESL students who studied further ACE courses after 1992, 16 per cent and 13 per cent respectively went on to complete courses to help them look for a job. These proportions were higher than for students enrolled in other course types. As ESL students tend to not go on to do Vocational Education courses, it is likely that some migrants who are unemployed may perceive doing more ESL classes as a means of improving their job prospects. The comparable figures for other course types are: Adult Basic Education (9 per cent), General Adult Education (8 per cent) and Access (6 per cent).

By looking at the numbers of participants, rather than proportions, another perspective emerges. Of participants, of the 95 persons who did courses after 1992 to help them look for a job, only 29 (31 per cent) did Vocational Education courses in 1992, compared to 46 (48 per cent) who did General Adult Education, and 19 (20 per cent) who did other courses. These figures reflect the greater numbers who were enrolled in General Adult Education.

4.4.6 How helpful have participants found ACE courses?

Question 14 on the questionnaire asked participants how helpful they have found all of the ACE courses they have completed since 1990. **Table A9** in the Additional tables section in part two of this report presents the findings for this question.

Of the 1,230 participants who responded to this question, 80 per cent reported that they have found ACE courses very helpful. This figure corresponds to 70 per cent of male and 82 per cent of female participants.

4.4.7 Key findings

Most of those who undertook an ACE course to gain some form of educational outcome achieved their goal. Furthermore, a proportion of participants who had no educational goals prior to doing the ACE course, subsequently achieved some form of educational outcome after completing the course. It was not only participants enrolled in Access courses and Adult Basic Education courses (which have specific educational goals) who achieved educational outcomes; significant proportions of participants from other course types achieved educational outcomes as well.

While it is not possible to establish a definite causal link between undertaking an ACE course and an educational pathway, the data suggests an association between the two. This possibility is also supported by the findings of the discussion groups in the previous chapter. Access courses, in particular, can be linked with the participant going on to study towards a qualification. This link was not as evident for participants of Adult Basic Education.

Those reporting the greatest likelihood of receiving some form of educational outcome came from disadvantaged social groupings; that is, young people and unemployed people. A higher proportion of young people or unemployed people also went on to study towards a formal qualification, compared to other students. Females were more likely than males to have gone on to study towards an educational qualification, although they were less likely to report an educational outcome. People from NESB backgrounds received mixed benefits, as outlined below. For many disadvantaged people, ACE represents their only chance of furthering their education.

While a higher proportion of males undertook Vocational Education courses in 1992, similar proportions of males and females went on to do ACE courses seeking to either look for a job or improve their skills and crafts in their job/preferred job. This indicates that a number of females obtain these skills from doing courses other than Vocational Education; particularly from General Adult Education courses.

Access students and young people (students aged 15 to 24 years) had the highest proportions of people who reported that they were assisted to prepare for study at a tertiary institution. In terms of educational pathways, Access students and students aged 15 to 24 years also had the greatest proportion of participants who actually went on to study towards an educational qualification after 1992.

Compared to participants who spoke English only, NESB people had a higher proportion who experienced an educational outcome, with most of these being assisted to prepare for additional ACE (usually ESL) courses. However, the proportion of ESL participants who went on to study towards an educational qualification after the 1992 ACE course was relatively low compared to other participants. Similarly, the number of Adult Basic Education students who went on to study towards a qualification was low.

Of those 1992 Adult Basic Education and ESL students who completed further ACE courses, a large number studied more ESL and/or reading and writing. This suggests that ACE is being used by migrants and people lacking literacy and numeracy skills to not only develop these skills, but to continue to build on what they have already learnt. However, relatively few participants in these two types of courses go on to do other types of ACE courses, in particular Vocational Education and Access.

TABLE 13. PERSONS EXPECTING TO BE HELPED WITH EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES, AND WHETHER THEY WERE HELPED

Educational expectations	*Expected to be helped and were*	*Did not expect to be helped and were*	*Expected to be helped and were not*	*Did not expect to be helped and were not*	***Total***
			PER CENT(a)		
Preparing for another adult/ community education course	10	10	4	76	**100**
Preparing for study at a university, TAFE college or other tertiary institution	5	4	2	89	**100**
Assisting with studies I was doing at the time	7	4	2	87	**100**

(a) Note that these percentages were calculated as a proportion of the **total** sample. For example, 245 people expected to be helped and were helped to prepare for another adult/community education course, which is 10 per cent of the total sample (245/2,388 = 10).

TABLE 14. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES BY TYPE OF COURSE

Educational outcomes(a)	*Adult basic education*	*ESL*	*Access*	*Vocational education*	*General adult education*	*Total(b)*
			NUMBER			
Prepared for another adult/ community education course	55	43	75	110	170	473
Prepared for study at a university, TAFE college or other tertiary institution	19	13	61	64	49	212
Assisted with studies I was doing at the time	30	17	48	87	74	266
Total	**150**	**117**	**284**	**450**	**1,314**	**2,388**
			PER CENT			
Prepared for another adult/ community education course	37	37	26	24	13	20
Prepared for study at a university, TAFE college or other tertiary institution	13	11	21	14	4	9
Assisted with studies I was doing at the time	20	15	17	19	6	11
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) People may have had more than one education outcome

(b) Includes persons for whom type of course was not stated or who attended more than one course

TABLE 15. PERSONS WHO STARTED STUDYING TOWARDS A QUALIFICATION AFTER COMPLETING A 1992 ACE COURSE: TYPE OF HIGHEST QUALIFICATION BY TYPE OF COURSE

Type of qualification studied towards after 1992 course	*Adult basic education/ESL(a)*	*Access*	*Vocational education*	*General adult education*	*Total(b)*
			NUMBER		
Year 10 or equivalent	3	0	1	8	12
Secondary school certificate	9	23	6	13	52
Trade certificate/apprenticeship	3	0	1	7	11
Other certificate(c)	4	10	32	46	92
Diploma or equivalent(d)	4	10	15	25	54
Bachelor degree	3	15	11	26	55
Postgraduate qualification	1	7	4	16	28
Other	7	2	15	19	43
Total	**34**	**67**	**85**	**160**	**347**
			PER CENT		
Year 10 or equivalent	9	0	1	5	3
Secondary school certificate	26	34	7	8	15
Trade certificate/apprenticeship	9	0	1	4	3
Other certificate(c)	12	15	38	29	27
Diploma or equivalent(d)	12	15	18	16	16
Bachelor degree	9	22	13	16	16
Postgraduate qualification	3	10	5	10	8
Other	21	3	18	12	12
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) Adult Basic Education and ESL have been combined as figures were too small to provide meaningful results. However, because figures are still small, they need to be treated with some caution.

(b) Includes persons for whom type of course was not stated or who attended more than one course.

(c) Figures for 'other certificate' should be treated with some caution. This category may include people who did courses that were not accredited post-school qualifications, or people who completed a secondary school qualification, eg. leaving certificate, but who ticked this category in error.

(d) Includes associate diplomas, undergraduate diplomas, technicians' certificates and advanced certificates.

TABLE 16. PERSONS COMPLETING ACE COURSES AFTER 1992: TYPES OF ACE COURSES BY 1992 TYPE OF COURSE

Types of courses completed since 1992(a)	*Adult basic education*	*ESL*	*Access*	*Vocational education*	*General adult education*	*Total(b)*
			NUMBER			
English as a second language	6	34	2	4	5	53
Reading and writing	19	27	5	5	10	68
Maths/numeracy	13	1	5	4	12	35
Courses to prepare you for returning to formal study	3	3	4	2	7	19
Adult VCE, HSC or SACE subjects	4	1	20	5	6	36
General study on topics of interest (eg. history, philosophy, social sciences)	7	1	24	14	70	123
Skills and crafts for general interest (eg. creative writing, knitting)	20	9	33	56	339	473
Skills and crafts for use in your job/ preferred job	4	4	18	67	106	202
Courses to help you look for a job	5	6	8	29	46	95
Other	19	3	71	55	181	335
Total	**55**	**48**	**136**	**181**	**573**	**1,021**
			PER CENT			
English as a second language	11	71	1	2	1	5
Reading and writing	35	56	4	3	2	7
Maths/numeracy	24	2	4	2	2	3
Courses to prepare you for returning to formal study	5	6	3	1	1	2
Adult VCE, HSC or SACE subjects	7	2	15	3	1	4
General study on topics of interest (eg. history, philosophy, social sciences)	13	2	18	8	12	12
Skills and crafts for general interest (eg. creative writing, knitting)	36	19	24	31	59	46
Skills and crafts for use in your job/ preferred job	7	8	13	37	18	20
Courses to help you look for a job	9	13	6	16	8	9
Other	35	6	52	30	32	33
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

VCE is the Victorian Certificate of Education. HSC is the Higher School Certificate. SACE is the South Australian Certificate of Education.

(a) Components may not add to total as more than one course may have been completed since 1992.

(b) Includes persons for whom type of course was not stated or who attended more than one course.

4.5 EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES AND PATHWAYS

4.5.1 Introduction

Previous sections have outlined how adult and community education courses have improved the skills of its participants. This section examines how these skills translate into various employment outcomes and pathways for those who were either unemployed, seeking to upgrade their work skills or take on skills to change their occupation. It must be considered, however, that many people seeking employment outcomes and pathways during 1992 would have been frustrated in achieving these because of the recession affecting Australia at the time. The reporting of employment outcomes might also be influenced by the expectations of the participants. For example, unemployed people were the most likely to report obtaining a range of key competency skills (see Section 4.3). However, some of these unemployed people may not report an employment outcome as they may regard finding employment as their only acceptable employment outcome. The fact that the course may have better equipped them to look for or find work is irrelevant to them when they were not able to actually find a job.

Employment outcomes were measured using responses to question 8 (parts f - h) on the questionnaire which looked at whether the course undertaken in 1992 helped participants in learning skills:

- to help with the job they were in at the time of enrolment.
- to help find a better job than the one they were in at the time of enrolment, or
- to help them find a job or start their own business.

Employment pathways were measured by comparing participants' labour force status at the time of the 1992 course with their labour force status in 1994.

The following tables[1] have been used in the analysis. Those tables prefixed with a letter 'A' can be found in the Additional tables section in part two of this report. The other tables are to be found at the end of this section.

- **Table 17** shows the proportions of people who experienced employment outcomes in terms of their employment expectations, compared to those who did not.
- **Table 18** presents employment outcomes by the type of course in which students were enrolled in at 1992.
- **Table A10** shows employment outcomes by sex.
- **Table A11** presents employment outcomes by age.

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[1] For some cells in the tables, less than eight people have reported employment outcomes. Care should be taken in interpreting these figures.

- **Table 19** shows the employment pathways of participants by comparing their labour force status at the time of the 1992 course with their labour force status in 1994.

When examining the data presented, some care needs to be taken in associating particular outcomes and pathways with enrolment in particular types of courses. For example, if a person who was unemployed at the time of the 1992 course subsequently found work, it cannot be concluded that doing the 1992 course resulted in that person finding work. There may have been a number of other reasons for this outcome. However, the possibility of the ACE course being the reason or a contributory reason cannot be discounted either.

4.5.2 Overall employment outcomes and pathways

More than a quarter of people surveyed (29 per cent) expected to gain at least one of the three employment related outcomes from their 1992 course. However, a lower proportion reported that they gained at least one employment outcome (about 25 per cent) (unpublished data). As the later figure includes some people who gained employment related outcomes when they had not originally expected this, the data indicates that a significant percentage of participants who expected an employment outcome did not have their expectations met. The effects of the recession in frustrating people in their attempts to secure an employment outcome at this time cannot be discounted when interpreting this result.

Course type

As would be expected, people undertaking Vocational Education courses were the most likely to experience employment related outcomes from their course, with over 60 per cent of participants undertaking these courses having at least one employment outcome (unpublished data). Even 28 per cent of Vocational Education students who were not in the labour force at the beginning of the course (that is; were not employed and not looking for work) reported an employment outcome (see **table 18**).

Although Vocational Education was most closely related with employment outcomes, about 27 per cent of all participants undertaking Adult Basic Education courses, 24 per cent of those undertaking Access courses, 18 per cent of those undertaking ESL courses and 13 per cent of those undertaking General Adult Education also experienced at least one employment outcome (unpublished data).

Sex

A slightly higher percentage of males than females reported achieving at least one employment outcome resulting from doing an ACE course in 1992 (refer to **table A10**). This difference may be due to greater proportions of males undertaking Vocational Education courses in 1992 (that is; 26 per cent of males compared with 17 per cent of female participants) and because a higher proportion of male participants were in the labour force, compared to female participants.

Age groups

Of employed students, young people (those aged 15 to 24 years) had the highest proportion reporting that they learnt skills to help them find a better job than the one they were in or start a new business. For unemployed students, young people had the greatest proportion reporting that they learnt skills to help them find a job or start their own business, compared to other unemployed students (see **table A11**).

Of employed students, those aged 35 to 44 years had the highest proportion that reported learning skills to help with the job they were in. For those not in the labour force, students of the same age group were the most likely to have reported having learnt skills to help find a job or start a business.

People of non-English speaking background (NESB)

Although the actual numbers involved are small, ESL students who were employed had relatively high proportions, compared to other students, who reported having either learnt skills to help with the job they were in or learnt skills to help them find a job or start their own business as a result of doing the 1992 ACE course (see **table 18**). However, a relatively low proportion of ESL students who were either unemployed or not in the labour force reported gaining skills to find a job or start their own business.

Labour force status

Table 17 shows that for employed participants or participants who were not in the labour force, about the same percentage had expectations of gaining an employment outcome as those who actually did achieve such an outcome. However, for unemployed persons, the percentage reporting having learnt skills to help them find a job or start their own business was significantly lower than the percentage who had an expectation of gaining that outcome (48 per cent compared to 62 per cent).

4.5.3 Employment outcomes for employed persons

As stated in the introduction to this section, employment outcomes involved whether the course undertaken in 1992 helped participants in learning skills to either help with the job they were in; to help find a better job than the one they were in; or help them find a job or start their own business.

Findings for **employed** participants in 1992 indicate that:

- 35 per cent were assisted by the ACE course with at least one employment outcome.
- 72 per cent of students undertaking Vocational Education courses were assisted with at least one employment outcome. The corresponding figures for those in other

course types were: 44 per cent for ESL, 36 per cent for Access, 35 per cent for Adult Basic Education and 18 per cent for General Adult Education courses.

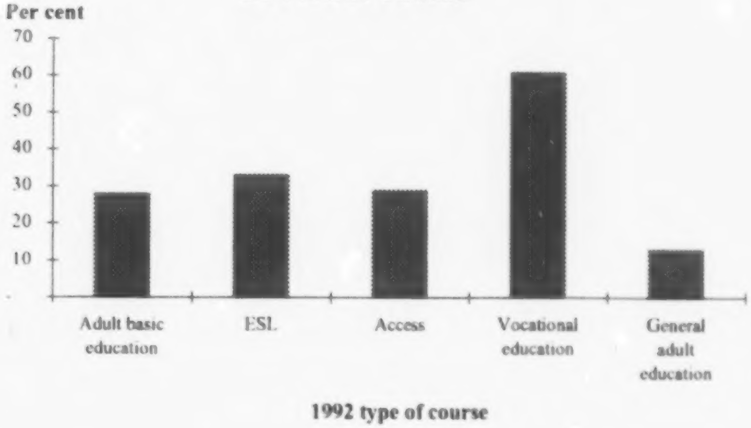
Each of the employment outcomes concerning employed persons are examined below. To assist with the analysis, two categories; learnt skills to help find a better job and learnt skills to start their own business have been combined.

Learnt skills to help with current job

Of those participants who were **employed** at the time of the 1992 course:

- 27 per cent expected to learn skills to help with their current job, while 28 per cent achieved this[2]. This occurred because 6 per cent of participants achieved this outcome when it wasn't their expectation, measured against 5 per cent who expected this outcome, but did not achieve it.
- approximately 80 per cent who had this expectation reported having achieved it.
- Vocational Education students had the highest proportion of people who felt that the 1992 course had given them skills to help with their current job (61 per cent). However, 33 per cent of students doing ESL, 29 per cent of students doing Access courses and 28 per cent of students doing Adult Basic Education also said they had achieved this outcome (refer to **graph 10**).
- 32 per cent of males and 27 per cent of females reported achieving this outcome. This reflects the greater proportion of males who did Vocational Education courses.

GRAPH 10: EMPLOYED PERSONS:
LEARNT SKILLS TO HELP WITH THE JOB THEY WERE IN
BY TYPE OF COURSE



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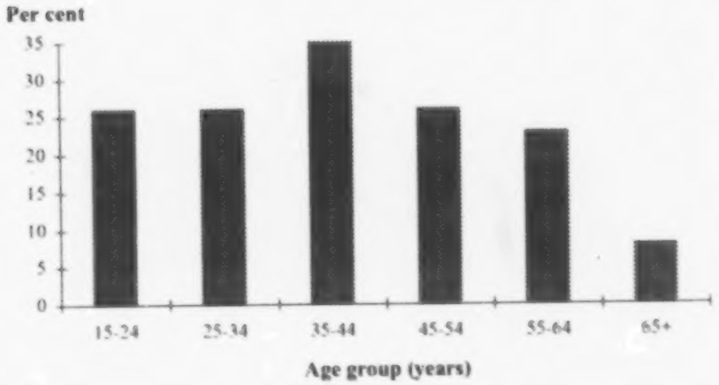
[2] Note: the proportion of people **expecting** to be helped is calculated by adding together the categories 'expected to be helped and were' and 'expected to be helped and were not'. The proportion who **were helped** was calculated by adding together the categories 'expected to be helped and were' and 'did not expect to be helped and were'. Percentages only are presented in table 17.

- 28 per cent of employed people aged between 15 and 64 years learnt skills to help with their current job, with the percentage peaking for people aged 35 to 44 years (35 per cent). This finding may indicate that students of the 35 to 44 age group are the ones who feel they need to upgrade their skills (perhaps with the use of new technology) for their work. **Graph 11** shows the employed participants who learnt skills to help with their current job by the age of those participants.

**GRAPH 11: EMPLOYED PERSONS:
LEARNT SKILLS TO HELP WITH THE JOB I WAS IN
BY AGE GROUP (YEARS)**



Learnt skills to help find a better job or to start their own business

Of those participants who were **employed** at the time of the 1992 course:

- 16 per cent expected to be helped to learn skills to find a better job or to start their own business, while 14 per cent of people achieved this. This occurred because 4 per cent of participants achieved this outcome when it wasn't their expectation, measured against 6 per cent who expected this outcome, but did not achieve it.

- 64 per cent who expected this outcome did achieve it.

- Vocational Education courses had the highest proportion of people who were helped (30 per cent), followed by 22 per cent of ESL students.

- equal proportions of male and female participants reported that they learnt skills to help them find a better job than they were in or start their own business

- a greater proportion of people aged 15 to 24 years (29 per cent) achieved this outcome, compared with other age groups between 25 and 64 years (which ranged from 11 to 16 per cent).

4.5.4 Employment outcomes for people who were unemployed or not in the labour force

The following findings relate to people who were either unemployed or not in the labour force and who sought to learn skills to find a job or start their own business.

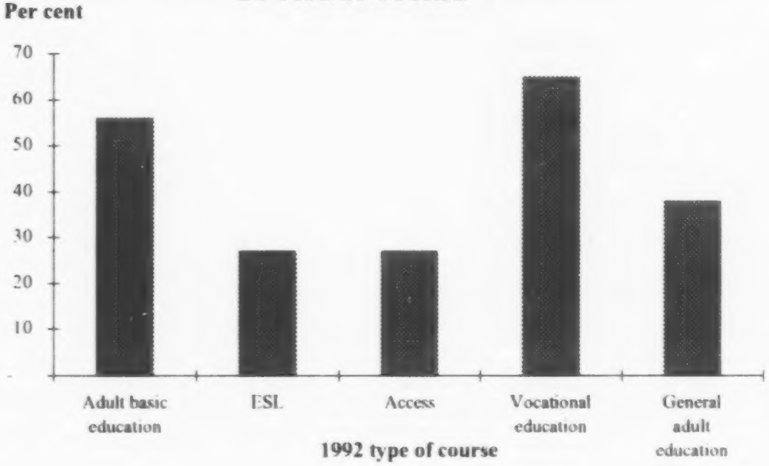
Of those who were **unemployed** at the time of the 1992 course:

- a much lower proportion (48 per cent) learnt skills to help them find a job or start a business than people expecting to gain those skills (62 per cent). This is despite the fact that 8 per cent achieved these skills when this wasn't their expectation, indicating that a relatively high proportion of participants (22 per cent) didn't have their expectations met.

- about 64 per cent of those who expected to learn these skills actually did learn them.

- 65 per cent of those undertaking Vocational Education courses reported that they learnt skills to help find a job or start a new business, compared to 56 per cent of Adult Basic Education students, 38 per cent of General Adult Education students, 27 per cent of ESL students and 27 per cent of Access students (refer to **graph 12**). The low percentage of ESL students reporting this outcome may suggest that either their expectations of possibly finding work are not being met or that they do not feel sufficiently equipped in English to seek this outcome.

GRAPH 12: UNEMPLOYED PERSONS: LEARNT SKILLS TO HELP FIND A JOB OR START A BUSINESS BY TYPE OF COURSE



- 42 per cent of males and 50 per cent of females reported learning these skills. This is despite the fact that a higher proportion of males were enrolled in Vocational Education courses.

- 59 per cent of participants aged 15 to 24 years and 52 per cent of those aged 35 to 44 years learnt skills to help them find a job or start their own business. However, proportions were also fairly high for other participants aged between 15 and 64 years.

Of those who were **not in the labour force** at the time of the 1992 course:

- a slightly lower proportion of students (9 per cent) learnt skills to help them find a job or start a business compared to people expecting to gain those skills (11 per cent). 3 per cent achieved these skills when this wasn't their expectation.

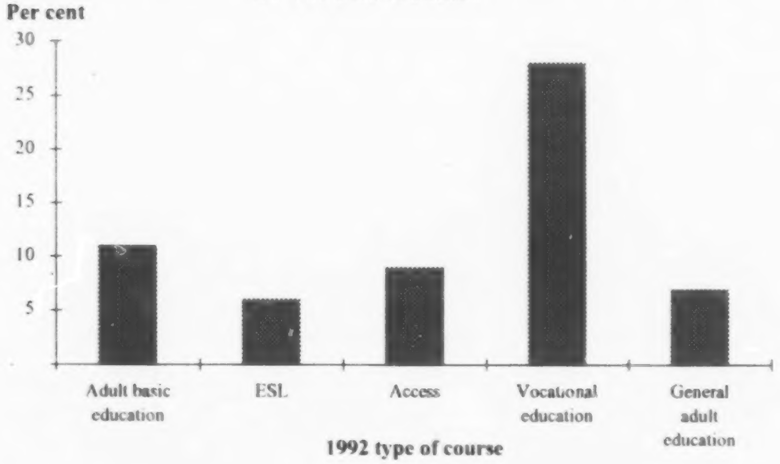
- about 64 per cent of those who expected to learn these skills actually did learn them, indicating that the proportion achieving these skills when this wasn't their expectation was comparatively high.

- 28 per cent of those undertaking Vocational Education courses learnt skills to help find a job or start their own business, compared to between 6 and 11 per cent of those doing other course types (refer to **graph 13**). This indicates that Vocational Education courses may be being undertaken by people contemplating returning to the labour force.

- equal proportions of males and females (10 per cent) learnt skills to help them find a job or start their own business.

- 21 per cent of participants aged 35 to 44 years and 17 per cent of those aged 15 to 24 years learnt skills to help them find a job or start their own business.

GRAPH 13: PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE: LEARNT SKILLS TO HELP FIND A JOB OR START A BUSINESS BY TYPE OF COURSE



4.5.5 Employment pathways

By comparing the labour force status of participants at the time of the 1992 course with their current labour force status, it is possible to establish the employment pathways of people since the completion of their 1992 course (refer to **table 19**). It should be kept in mind that a change in a person's labour force status could have been influenced by many factors, while the skills gained from doing an ACE course may have been one of these factors.

The data indicates a flow towards obtaining employment by ACE participants, despite the effects of the recession. It was found that:

- the numbers of participants who were employed increased by 10 per cent between the start of the ACE course in 1992, compared to June 1994, while the numbers who were unemployed decreased by 10 per cent and the numbers who were not in the labour force also decreased by 10 per cent. Although no comparable figures exist for trends for members of the general population with the same characteristics, the above occurred despite the fact that the unemployment rate in the general population had increased over the same period. The proportion of the general population who were not in the labour force had also increased at this time (ABS 1992; ABS 1994).

- 43 per cent of people who were unemployed at the start of the 1992 course had a job by June 1994.

- 12 per cent of people who were not in the labour force had also gained employment by June 1994.

- 10 per cent of people who were employed in 1992 were either unemployed or not in the labour force by June 1994.

However, to some extent, the findings above may be due to the greater likelihood of participants who had succeeded in finding work sending in their questionnaires, compared to other participants.

4.5.6 Key Findings

The success of ACE in assisting people achieve employment outcomes must be perceived in the knowledge that the economy in 1992 was in recession. The study showed that 29 per cent of participants expected to achieve at least one employment outcome, compared to 25 per cent who actually reported gaining such an outcome. Also, it must be remembered that employment outcomes for some people, particularly unemployed persons, were possibly only reported after experiencing success in finding work or finding another job, despite, perhaps, having learnt vocational skills from doing the course. Anything less than success in their quest may be judged by the participant as a negative outcome.

22 per cent of unemployed participants who expected to be helped to find a job or start their own business did not achieve their expectation (despite a relatively high proportion reporting gaining many key competency skills, as reported in section 4.3). This is probably for the

reasons outlined above. Employed participants were more likely to have achieved an outcome, particularly those seeking to obtain skills to help them in the job they were in.

Looking only at participants who had an expectation of some employment outcome, most (about 70 per cent) did achieve an outcome. The numbers of people who did not achieve an expected outcome were counterbalanced, to an extent, by a number of participants who achieved an employment outcome which they did not expect.

As was expected, people undertaking Vocational Education courses were the most likely to experience employment outcomes, with about 60 per cent of all participants undertaking these courses gaining employment related skills. However, employment outcomes also occurred across other course types, ranging from 27 per cent of those undertaking Adult Basic Education courses, to 13 per cent of those taking General Adult Education courses.

Although a high percentage of unemployed ESL students reported gaining at least one key competency skill (as reported in section 4.3), only a relatively small proportion reported an employment outcome. This suggests that either their expectations of finding employment are not being met or that they do not feel sufficiently equipped in English to seek this outcome. The former of these two reasons is consistent with the finding that a relatively high proportion of NESB people who became unemployed during the principal years of the recession had not found employment when the effects of the recession had begun to ease (ABS 1993a). By contrast, ESL students who were employed had a fairly high proportion who reported an employment outcome.

Young people (those aged 15 to 24 years) and people aged 35 to 44 had the highest proportions that gained employment related outcomes. A greater proportion of young people reported gaining skills to find a job or start a new business or to get a better job than the one they were in. Employed participants aged 35 to 44 years had the highest proportion who learnt skills to help with their current job, suggesting they felt a need to upgrade their skills. Data suggests that participants of this age group were also prominent in seeking to obtain skills to enable them to re-enter the labour force.

TABLE 17. PERSONS EXPECTING TO BE HELPED WITH EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES, AND WHETHER THEY WERE HELPED

Employment expectations	*Expected to be helped and were*	*Did not expect to be helped and were*	*Expected to be helped and were not*	*Did not expect to be helped and were not*	***Total***
	PER CENT(b)				
Persons employed at time of 1992 course(a)					
Learning skills to help with the job I was in	22	6	5	67	**100**
Learning skills to help me find a better job than the one I was in or start my own business	10	4	6	80	**100**
Persons unemployed at time of 1992 course					
Learning skills to help me find a job or start my own business	40	8	22	31	**100**
Persons not employed and not seeking employment at time of 1992 course					
Learning skills to help me find a job or start my own business	7	3	4	87	**100**

(a) Employed people may have had more than one employment expectation

(b) Note that percentages were calculated as a proportion of the relevant total population. For example, 247 employed people expected to be helped and were helped to learn skills for the job they were in, which is 22 per cent of employed people (247/1,119) = 22

TABLE 18. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES BY TYPE OF COURSE

Employment outcomes	*Adult basic education*	*ESL*	*Access*	*Vocational education*	*General adult education*	*Total(b)*
			NUMBER			
Persons employed at time of 1992 course(a)						
Learnt skills to help with the job I was in	16	6	41	165	78	313
Learnt skills to help me find a better job than the one I was in or start my own business	9	4	24	80	41	161
Total employed at 1992	*57*	*18*	*143*	*270*	*610*	*1,119*
Persons unemployed at time of 1992 course						
Learnt skills to help me find a job or start my own business	14	9	6	51	21	107
Total unemployed at 1992	*25*	*33*	*22*	*79*	*56*	*225*
Persons not employed and not seeking employment at time of 1992 course						
Learnt skills to help me find a job or start my own business	7	4	10	27	46	95
Total not employed and not seeking employment at 1992	*64*	*63*	*116*	*97*	*624*	*1,001*
			PER CENT			
Persons employed at time of 1992 course(a)						
Learnt skills to help with the job I was in	28	33	29	61	13	28
Learnt skills to help me find a better job than the one I was in or start my own business	16	22	17	30	7	14
Total employed at 1992	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*
Persons unemployed at time of 1992 course						
Learnt skills to help me find a job or start my own business	56	27	27	65	38	48
Total unemployed at 1992	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*
Persons not employed and not seeking employment at time of 1992 course						
Learnt skills to help me find a job or start my own business	11	6	9	28	7	9
Total not employed and not seeking employment at 1992	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*

(a) Employed people may have had more than one employment outcome.
(b) Includes persons for whom type of course was not stated or who attended more than one course.

TABLE 19. LABOUR FORCE STATUS AT TIME OF 1992 COURSE BY CURRENT LABOUR FORCE STATUS

	Current labour force status			
Labour force status at time of 1992 course	*Employed*	*Unemployed (looking for work)*	*Not employed and not seeking employment*	*Total(a)*
		NUMBER		
Employed	998	40	70	1,119
Unemployed (looking for work)	97	106	18	225
Not employed and not seeking employment	120	55	799	1,001
Total(b)	**1,224**	**203**	**897**	**2,388**
		PER CENT		
Employed	89	4	6	100
Unemployed (looking for work)	43	47	8	100
Not employed and not seeking employment	12	5	80	100
Total(b)	**51**	**9**	**38**	**100**

(a) Includes persons for whom labour force status at time of 1992 course was not stated.
(b) Includes persons for whom current labour force status was not stated.

4.6 BENEFITS TO INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETY

4.6.1 Introduction

This section firstly gives an overview of the overall benefits of ACE courses to individuals and society in terms of the types of courses participants were enrolled in at 1992, and participants' sex, age and labour force status. Whether participants' expectations of their courses were met is also examined, followed by an analysis of each type of outcome. The types of individual and social outcomes examined were as follows:

- personal outcomes.
- family outcomes.
- community outcomes, and
- language, literacy and numeracy outcomes.

Benefits to individuals and society were measured using responses to question 7 on the questionnaire, and question 8 (parts a and b) (refer to Appendix 3).

Reports in the past, such as *Come In Cinderella*, have acknowledged the contribution that ACE has made to participants' self-development. However, the benefits of education also need to be examined in a wider context. For instance, how does educating individuals benefit society? This not only includes producing a more skilled and flexible workforce (as discussed in section 4.3), but also a strong, supportive community; for example, people involved in voluntary work for organisations that assist disadvantaged groups. Additionally, there may also be benefits for families, such as improving family relationships, when a member attends an ACE course.

It is also important to explore language, literacy and numeracy outcomes, because English language and numeracy skills are vital, both in the workforce and the community, and in coping with day-to-day living. General improvements to language and communication skills were covered in section 4.3.3. However, this section looks specifically at whether people of non-English speaking background actually improved their English skills.

The following tables[1] have been used in the analysis. The tables prefixed with a letter 'A' can be found in the Additional tables section in part two of this report. The other tables are to be found at the end of this section.

- **Table 20** shows people's individual and social expectations, and whether these expectations were met.
- **Table 21** outlines people's individual and social outcomes in terms of what types of courses they were enrolled in at 1992.

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[1] For some cells in the tables, less than eight people have reported individual and social outcomes. Care should be taken in interpreting these figures.

- **Table A12** presents these outcomes by participants' sex.

- **Table A13** shows these outcomes cross-classified by participants' age.

4.6.2 Overall benefits to individuals and society

Unpublished data indicates that, overall, a high proportion of people reported that they achieved individual, family or community benefits (outcomes) from the ACE course they completed in 1992:

- 95 per cent of respondents said they obtained at least one personal benefit.

- 50 per cent of all respondents reported that they obtained at least one family benefit.

- 40 per cent of people gained at least one community outcome.

- 24 per cent of all respondents indicated that they experienced at least one language, literacy or numeracy outcome.

The three most frequently reported outcomes were learning about a topic, skill or craft of interest, meeting new people or people with the same interests, and being helped personally (eg. increased self-confidence). Not all of the outcome categories are covered in the analysis that follows. However, the data for all categories are presented in the tables at the end of this section.

Course type

Personal and social outcomes occurred across the range of course types. In particular, personal outcomes were frequently reported by students doing different types of courses. The results suggest that more is achieved from adult and community education courses than merely the core learning goals. For example, over half of Vocational Education students reported that the course helped them personally (eg. improved self-confidence, increased motivation)[2].

Of interest was the significance of the outcomes for ESL students. In 8 of the 14 outcome categories, the highest proportion of students who were helped were enrolled in ESL (refer to **table 21**). In comparison to students enrolled in other course types, a high proportion of ESL students reported outcomes related to parenting (eg. helping children with their schooling), improved English language skills, and becoming more aware of services and information available in the community.

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[2] 'Help me personally (eg. self-confidence, learn to relax, motivate me, help me to make decisions' is a sub-category of the personal category (refer to the tables at the end of this section for a complete list).

Sex

In terms of differences between males and females, in almost all categories (except in relation to language, literacy and numeracy outcomes), a greater proportion of females than males reported that the 1992 course in which they were enrolled was of assistance to them (refer to **table A12**). This was particularly the case with some personal benefits, such as 'helped me personally' (eg. self-confidence) and 'meeting new people or people with the same interests'. Additionally, a higher proportion of females than males reported that they developed a skill or craft for use around the house. However, in other instances, the differences in proportions were only minimal.

Although a greater proportion of males were enrolled in Vocational Education courses, and more females were involved in General Adult Education, there was still significant proportions of males reporting that they experienced particular personal, family and community outcomes. The reason for the higher percentage of males reporting language, literacy and numeracy outcomes is likely to be due to their higher rate of enrolment in ESL or Adult Basic Education courses, compared to females.

Age groups

There was not a great deal of variation in the reporting of outcomes by different age groups (see **table A13**). A higher proportion of older participants (those aged 55 and over) said they met new people (perhaps helping to overcome social isolation) and were helped to deal with major changes to their lives. Community outcomes were reported by a greater proportion of 55 to 64 year olds. The results often reflected the 'life stages' people were at. For example, younger people (those aged 15 to 24 years) were more likely to report learning a skill or craft for some extra money, while those at the 25 to 54 years age group were more likely to report family outcomes.

Labour force status

For most of the outcome categories, a higher proportion of unemployed participants reported outcomes compared to employed participants or those not in the labour force (unpublished data). In particular, a much greater proportion of unemployed people said they experienced family and community outcomes compared to other participants.

4.6.3 Were expectations of the course met?

Table 20, which can be found at the end of this section, outlines the proportions of students expecting an individual or social outcome[3], and whether they achieved this outcome. In all but one category (learnt a skill or craft to help them make a bit of extra money), the overall proportion of people achieving outcomes at least equalled the number who expected those outcomes.

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[3] Note that the proportion of people **expecting** to be helped is calculated by adding together the categories 'expected to be helped and were' and 'expected to be helped and were not'. The proportion who **were helped** was calculated by adding together the categories 'expected to be helped and were' and 'did not expect to be helped and were'. Percentages only are presented in table 20, thus all of the figures presented in this analysis cannot be calculated directly from this table.

There were often quite high proportions of people who reported outcomes they did not expect, particularly for 'meeting new people or people with the same interests' followed by 'helped the participant personally'. Across all sub-categories, only small proportions of people did not have their expectations met (ranging from 1 per cent to 7 per cent).

4.6.4 Personal outcomes

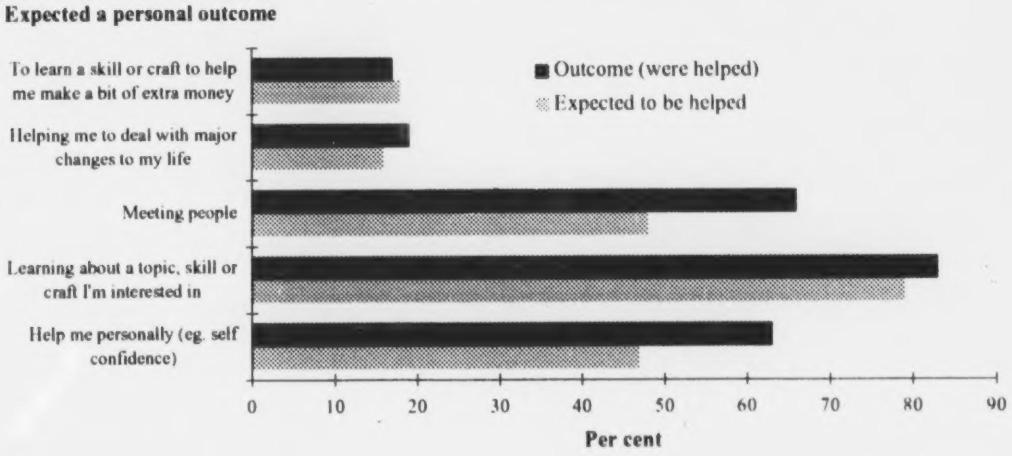
Personal benefits were frequently reported by respondents, which is consistent with findings from previous studies. *Come In Cinderella* (1991) noted the importance of personal benefits, particularly improved self-confidence, in terms of having flow-on outcomes such as finding work or doing some sort of educational course.

Helped the participant personally

This sub-category involved, for example, gaining increased self-confidence, learning to relax, gaining increased motivation or a greater ability to make decisions. Being helped personally was reported by:

- 63 per cent of respondents. Only 47 per cent of people expected this outcome at the beginning of the course. There was a high proportion of participants (21 per cent) who were helped personally when they didn't expect this (refer to **graph 14).**
- a greater proportion of ESL students (75 per cent) than students enrolled in other course types, although the difference was minimal. The next highest proportion was for Adult Basic Education students (73 per cent), followed by Access students (69 per cent).

GRAPH 14: PERSONAL EXPECTATIONS BY OUTCOMES



- 65 per cent of females and 57 per cent of males. This compares with 50 per cent of females and 36 per cent of males who expected to be helped. Hence, a significant proportion of males experienced this outcome as an unexpected one (refer to **tables A12** and **A15** in the Additional tables section in part two of this report).

- a slightly higher proportion of people who were unemployed at the time of the 1992 course (70 per cent) compared to employed people (60 per cent) and those not in the labour force (65 per cent) (unpublished data).

Met new people or people with the same interests

The discussion group findings indicated that ACE provides an environment which encourages social interaction during the learning process. This is particularly important for people who have experienced periods of isolation, and women who are not in the labour force and are looking after children at home. The ACE environment is also important for NESB people and people with poor literacy or numeracy skills; ACE gives ESL and Adult Basic Education students the opportunity to learn by interacting with others who are at a similar level of learning.

The questionnaire examined the opportunity that ACE gave participants to interact with new people. It found that:

- 48 per cent of people expected to meet new people when they enrolled. In fact, 66 per cent of people reported that they achieved this outcome as a result of completing the 1992 course. 23 per cent of participants met new people when this wasn't their expectation (refer to **graph 14**).

- a slightly greater proportion of ESL students (74 per cent) and General Adult Education students (72 per cent) achieved this outcome compared to people enrolled in other course types. For other course types, the proportions were: 70 per cent of Adult Basic Education students, 63 per cent of Access students and 44 per cent of Vocational Education students reported this outcome.

- 69 per cent of females and 55 per cent of males met new people or people with the same interests.

- a higher proportion of older participants than younger participants reported this outcome: 73 per cent of people aged 55 years or older, compared to 64 per cent of people aged less than 55.

Helped the participant deal with major changes to their life

Significant changes such as a job loss, divorce or death in the family can have major consequences, not only to individuals, but to families, and often to the community. For example, unemployment is correlated with illness and a number of social problems (Langmore & Quiggen 1994). The results of this study indicate that ACE courses can help people to cope with major changes to their lives, with 19 per cent of participants reporting that they experienced this outcome. Additionally, it was not only General Adult Education courses (which are often directed towards personal development) that can help people deal with these changes, but a variety of course types. This outcome was reported by:

- a greater proportion of Access (26 per cent) and General Adult Education students (20 per cent) than those enrolled in other course types. However, 17 per cent of Adult Basic Education students and 15 per cent of ESL students also reported this outcome. Access students who had this outcome may have chosen to enrol in Access courses when the major change in their lives affected their financial security or self-esteem, and thus led them to reassessing their educational qualifications.

- 20 per cent of females and 17 per cent of male students.

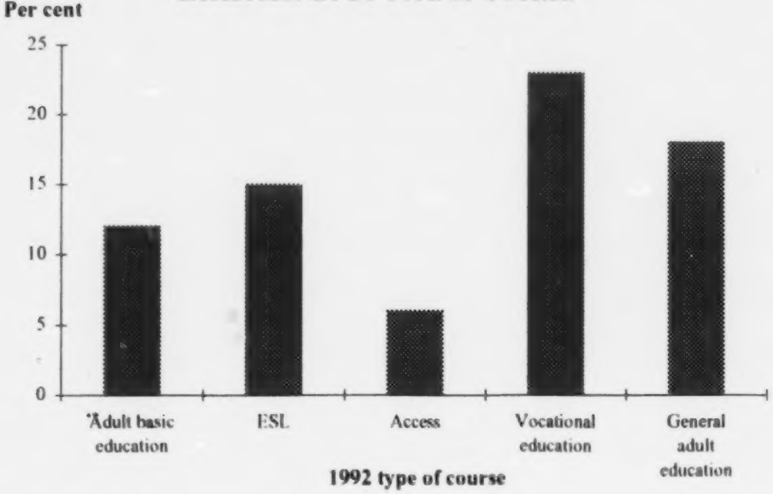
- a greater proportion of people aged 55 years or over (29 per cent) than people aged less than 55 years (16 per cent). The major change for people 55 years or over was probably retirement, children leaving home or the death of a spouse.

Learnt a skill or craft to make some extra money

While this was listed on the questionnaire as a personal outcome, it could also be regarded as an employment related outcome because it involves income generation. Learning a skill or craft to make some extra money was reported by 17 per cent of participants. This outcome was reported by:

- a greater proportion of Vocational Education students (23 per cent) and General Adult Education students (18 per cent) compared to other students (see **graph 15**)

GRAPH 15: LEARNT A SKILL OR CRAFT FOR A BIT OF EXTRA MONEY BY TYPE OF COURSE



- a slightly higher proportion of females (18 per cent) compared to males (16 per cent). Some women reporting this outcome could be those who were enrolled in General Adult Education courses, and made some money by selling their craftwork to friends or family members. This is suggested from the findings of the discussion groups.

- a higher proportion of younger people. 21 per cent of people aged less than 45 learnt a skill or craft to make a bit of extra money compared to 14 per cent of people who were 45 years or over.

- 28 per cent of unemployed people, compared to 16 per cent of employed people and 17 per cent of those who were not in the labour force (unpublished data).

4.6.5 Family outcomes

In the questionnaire, family outcomes covered four aspects; firstly whether the person was helped in becoming a better parent or were able to assist their children with their schooling; secondly, whether the person developed a skill for use around the house; thirdly whether, the person was helped to get along better with their spouse or partner; and lastly whether the person was assisted in the caring of disabled children or elderly or disabled relatives. The findings for the first three listed aspects are presented below.

Helped the participant become a better parent or to assist children with their schooling

15 per cent of people reported that they were helped to become better parents and 11 per cent said they were better able to assist their children with their schooling. This finding supports the notion that a particular outcome gained by a participant may also benefit other people; for example, parents who do a computing course and then help their children to learn to use computers. Some of the other findings relating to these outcomes include:

- 6 per cent of respondents were helped to become better parents when they didn't expect this, and 4 per cent of respondents were helped to assist their children with their schooling when they didn't expect this.

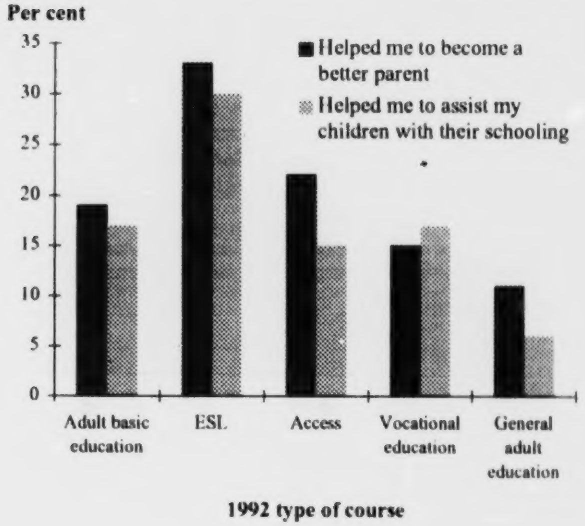
- a greater proportion of ESL students compared to students enrolled in other course types said that their course helped them to become better parents (33 per cent) and to assist their children with their schooling (30 per cent). Some discussion group participants who were enrolled in ESL courses mentioned how their relationship with their children had improved once they had learnt to speak English better. **Graph 16** outlines these outcomes by the type of course participants were enrolled in at 1992.

- similar proportions of males and females reported being helped to assist their children with their schooling (12 per cent of males compared to 11 per cent of females). 11 per cent of males compared to 16 per cent of females said they were helped to become better parents.

- 20 per cent of unemployed people reported becoming better parents, compared to 12 per cent of employed people and 16 per cent of those not in the labour force (unpublished data).

- 18 per cent of unemployed participants said they were helped to assist their children with their schooling, compared to 10 per cent of employed participants and 11 per cent of those not in the labour force (unpublished data).

GRAPH 16: PARENTING OUTCOMES BY TYPE OF COURSE



Developed a skill or craft for use around the house

Almost one third of participants reported this outcome. Specifically:

- a far greater proportion of General Adult Education students developed a skill or craft for use around the house (44 per cent) compared to other students. This reflects the nature of General Adult Education; that is, many of the courses that fall under this title relate to learning practical skills and crafts.

- 34 per cent of females and 25 per cent of males reported this outcome. This may partly be explained by there being a greater proportion of females than males enrolled in General Adult Education courses in 1992 (refer to **table 1** in section 4.2).

Helped to get along better with spouse or partner

13 per cent of participants reported this outcome. This outcome was also reported by a higher proportion of Access or ESL students (23 per cent and 21 per cent respectively), compared to other students.

4.6.6 Community outcomes

Community outcomes were reported more often by people from disadvantaged groups, for example, ESL or Adult Basic Education students (a high proportion of whom did not have post-school qualifications) and unemployed people.

Became involved or more involved with voluntary work or community activities

Voluntary work not only benefits the organisations that rely on volunteer labour, but also the volunteers themselves. For example, *Come In Cinderella* noted that greater participation in the community, such as doing voluntary work, can result in participants subsequently obtaining paid work. Questionnaire findings indicated that 15 per cent of students reported this outcome. Furthermore:

- becoming involved or more involved in voluntary work was more likely to be reported by ESL (NESB) and Adult Basic Education students (26 per cent and 21 per cent respectively) (see **graph 17**).
- 16 per cent of female and 11 per cent of male participants said they gained this outcome.
- the age groups with the greatest proportions of people reporting this outcome were 55 to 64 year olds (19 per cent), followed by 35 to 44 year olds (18 per cent).
- 27 per cent of unemployed people reported becoming involved or more involved in voluntary work, compared to 10 per cent of employed people and 18 per cent of those not in the labour force (unpublished data).

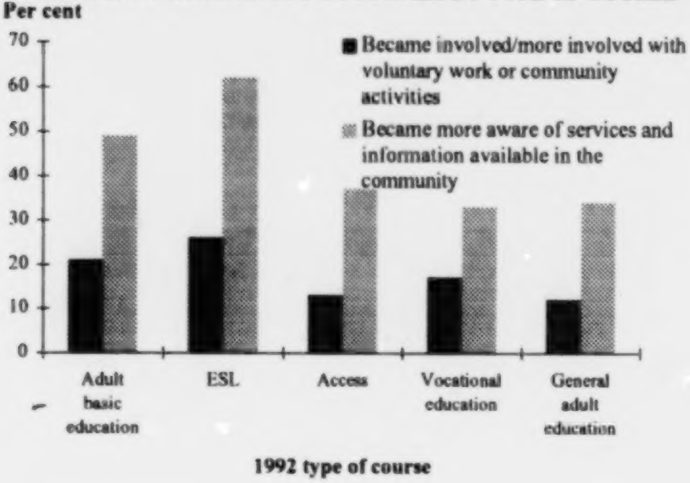
Became more aware of services and information available in the community

Discussion group findings indicated that access to information is an important foundation from which other outcomes can be worked towards; for example, some participants found out about other courses through attending an ACE centre or neighbourhood house. Becoming more aware of services and information available in the community was reported by 37 per cent of ACE students. Also:

- 62 per cent of ESL students and 49 per cent of Adult Basic Education students (see **graph 17**).
- 14 per cent of respondents when they had not originally expect this outcome.
- a greater proportion of females (38 per cent) compared to males (32 per cent).
- a greater proportion of 55 to 64 year olds (48 per cent) compared to people of other age groups (35 per cent).

- 51 per cent of unemployed people, 29 per cent of employed people and 44 per cent of those not in the labour force (unpublished data).

GRAPH 17: COMMUNITY OUTCOMES BY TYPE OF COURSE



4.6.7 Language, literacy or numeracy outcomes

Helped the participant to speak English better where English was not their first language

The discussion groups revealed how learning to speak English better had a number of outcomes, ranging from undertaking voluntary work, to being able to understand the news on television. As would be expected, the questionnaire results showed that people of NESB experienced the most benefits in terms of being helped to speak English better. This outcome was reported by 8 per cent of all participants and by:

- 79 per cent of ESL students and 23 per cent of Adult Basic Education students (refer to **graph 18**).
- a greater proportion of males (11 per cent) than females (7 per cent). This probably reflects the greater proportion of males who were enrolled in ESL and Adult Basic Education courses.
- slightly more 45 to 64 year olds (about 10 per cent) than other age groups, perhaps reflecting the higher rate of involvement of this age group in ESL courses.
- a significantly greater proportion of unemployed people (22 per cent) compared to employed people (3 per cent) and those not in the labour force (9 per cent) (unpublished data).

Improved speaking, reading, writing or mathematical skills

The discussion group findings showed how improving language, literacy and numeracy skills helped people to function better in their daily lives; for example, by being able to prepare a resume or fill in forms. Improved speaking, reading, writing or mathematical skills were reported by 23 per cent of all students. Of those who said that they improved these skills:

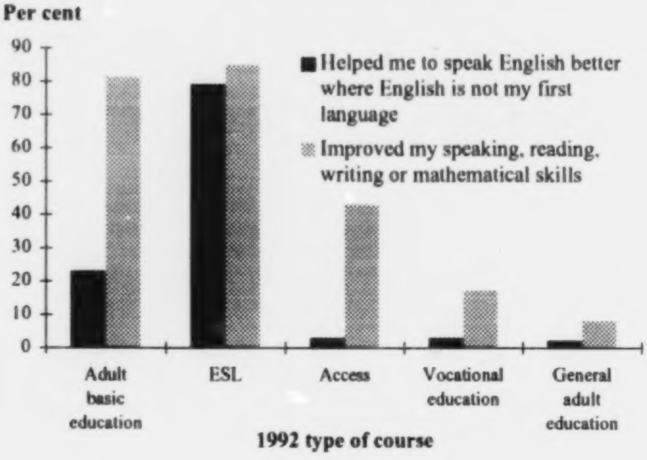
- 85 per cent were ESL students and 81 per cent were Adult Basic Education students (refer to **graph 18**). However, these skills were also reported by students in other course types; for example, 43 per cent of those doing Access courses also reported this outcome. The relatively high proportion of Access students may reflect the emphasis these types of courses place on improving research-related skills (eg. writing essays) and communication skills, in preparation for further study.

- 29 per cent were males and 21 per cent were females. This result may be explained by there being a greater proportion of males enrolled in Adult Basic Education or ESL courses in 1992.

- the greatest proportion (31 per cent) were in the 15 to 24 years age bracket, compared to other age groups.

- a significantly greater proportion were unemployed people (41 per cent) compared to employed people (17 per cent) and those not in the labour force (25 per cent) (unpublished data).

GRAPH 18: LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND NUMERACY OUTCOMES BY TYPE OF COURSE



4.6.8 Key findings

The questionnaire showed that a high proportion of respondents across a range of courses achieved personal outcomes from ACE courses, and the discussion groups showed how such outcomes benefited participants. For example, increased self-confidence can have many benefits, from feeling able to express an opinion, to undertaking voluntary work, to applying for a job. Personal outcomes were frequently reported by NESB people, unemployed people and women.

Adult and community education clearly had major family and community benefits for disadvantaged groups as well. For example, significant numbers of ESL students not only reported improvements to their language skills, but also learnt more about their community, interacted more with other people, and felt that they became better parents. ACE thus assists NESB people to become more involved in the Australian community.

This section has shown how categorising courses into course types, for example 'General Adult Education' and Vocational Education' does not always provide a full picture of the benefits of these courses. That is, a particular course may have a number of outcomes other than those that would be most expected. For example, an Adult Basic Education course not only improves people's literacy and numeracy skills, but may also result in outcomes such as increased self-confidence, doing voluntary work and becoming a better parent.

TABLE 20. PERSONS EXPECTING TO BE HELPED WITH INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES, AND WHETHER THEY WERE HELPED

Individual and social expectations(a)	*Expected to be helped and were*	*Did not expect to be helped and were*	*Expected to be helped and were not*	*Did not expect to be helped and were not*	***Total***
	PER CENT(b)				
Personal expectations					
Help me personally (eg. self confidence, learn to relax, motivate me, help me to make decisions)	42	21	5	32	**100**
Learning about a topic, skill or craft I'm interested in	73	10	6	11	**100**
Meeting new people or people with the same interests	43	23	5	29	**100**
Helping me to deal with major changes to my life (eg. separation, death of a friend or family member, having children, retirement)	13	6	3	78	**100**
To learn a skill or craft to help me make a bit of extra money	11	6	7	76	**100**
Family expectations					
Helping me to become a better parent	9	6	2	83	**100**
Assisting me to care for disabled children or elderly/disabled relatives	2	2	1	95	**100**
Developing a skill or craft for use around the house	25	6	6	62	**100**
Helping me to get along better with my husband/wife/partner	7	6	2	85	**100**
Help me to assist my children with their schooling	7	4	2	87	**100**
Community expectations					
Getting involved/more involved with voluntary work or community activities	10	5	4	81	**100**
Becoming more aware of services and information available in the community	23	14	7	56	**100**
Language, literacy and numeracy expectations					
Helping me to speak English better where English is not my first language	7	1	1	91	**100**
Improving my speaking, reading, writing or mathematical skills	17	6	4	73	**100**

(a) People may have had a number of different expectations.

(b) Note that percentages were calculated as a proportion of the total sample. For example, 998 people expected to be helped and were helped personally (eg. self-confidence, learn to relax, motivate me, help me to make decisions). This is 42 per cent of the total sample (998/2,388) = 42.

TABLE 21. INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES BY TYPE OF COURSE

Individual and social outcomes(a)	*Adult basic education*	*ESL*	*Access*	*Vocational education*	*General adult education*	*Total(b)*
	NUMBER					
Personal outcomes						
Helped me personally (eg. self confidence, learn to relax, motivate me, help me to make decisions)	110	88	195	246	809	1,504
Learnt about a topic, skill or craft I'm interested in	89	44	231	382	1,175	1,988
Met new people or people with the same interests	105	87	179	200	946	1,580
Helped me to deal with major changes to my life (eg. separation, death of a friend or family member, having children, retirement)	26	18	73	49	266	458
Learnt a skill or craft which helped me make a bit of extra money	18	17	18	103	239	416
Family outcomes						
Helped me to become a better parent	28	39	63	67	144	355
Assisted me to care for disabled children or elderly/disabled relatives	13	11	13	29	37	107
Developed a skill or craft for use around the house	23	24	18	84	577	757
Helped me to get along better with my husband/wife/partner	20	24	65	28	158	312
Helped me to assist my children with their schooling	26	35	43	76	74	263
Community outcomes						
Became involved/more involved with voluntary work or community activities	32	30	38	78	161	364
Became more aware of services and information available in the community	74	72	104	148	445	886
Language, literacy and numeracy outcomes						
Helped me to speak English better where English is not my first language	35	92	8	15	24	181
Improved my speaking, reading, writing or mathematical skills	122	100	121	75	109	545
Total	**150**	**117**	**284**	**450**	**1,314**	**2,388**

(a) People may have had more than one outcome.

(b) Includes persons for whom type of course was not stated or who attended more than one course.

TABLE 21. INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES BY TYPE OF COURSE *- continued*

Individual and social outcomes(a)	*Adult basic education*	*ESL*	*Access*	*Vocational education*	*General adult education*	*Total(b)*
			PER CENT			
Personal outcomes						
Helped me personally (eg. self confidence, learn to relax, motivate me, help me to make decisions)	73	75	69	55	62	63
Learnt about a topic, skill or craft I'm interested in	59	38	81	85	89	83
Met new people or people with the same interests	70	74	63	44	72	66
Helped me to deal with major changes to my life (eg. separation, death of a friend or family member, having children, retirement)	17	15	26	11	20	19
Learnt a skill or craft which helped me make a bit of extra money	12	15	6	23	18	17
Family outcomes						
Helped me to become a better parent	19	33	22	15	11	15
Assisted me to care for disabled children or elderly/disabled relatives	9	9	5	6	3	4
Developed a skill or craft for use around the house	15	21	6	19	44	32
Helped me to get along better with my husband/wife/partner	13	21	23	6	12	13
Helped me to assist my children with their schooling	17	30	15	17	6	11
Community outcomes						
Became involved/more involved with voluntary work or community activities	21	26	13	17	12	15
Became more aware of services and information available in the community	49	62	37	33	34	37
Language, literacy and numeracy outcomes						
Helped me to speak English better where English is not my first language	23	79	3	3	2	8
Improved my speaking, reading, writing or mathematical skills	81	85	43	17	8	23
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) People may have had more than one outcome.

(b) Includes persons for whom type of course was not stated or who attended more than one course.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING COMMENTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study, *Outcomes and Pathways in Adult and Community Education*, has demonstrated that adult and community education has a wide range of benefits to participants, including those related to vocational and educational outcomes. The contribution that ACE makes to vocational education and training has not been well recognised outside of the sector (*Come In Cinderella* 1991). It is hoped that this study will contribute to a wider recognition of the importance of ACE, and the diversity of its outcomes.

This chapter draws together some of the important themes and issues from the discussion groups and the questionnaire findings. Some of these key themes include:

- ACE provides an environment where learning is an enjoyable and ongoing experience, and a diverse range of different courses are offered. These courses include those which teach 'life' skills such as literacy and language, which are essential in order for people to be able to participate fully in the community.
- although this study did not seek to directly measure quality, it suggests that ACE is providing quality education. For example, most people met their expectations of the 1992 course in which they were enrolled, and disadvantaged groups gained many benefits from doing ACE courses. However, in some instances, services need to be broadened for such groups.
- the skills people learn in ACE are a springboard to further opportunities in training, education and employment.
- the personal benefits of doing ACE courses, such as improved self-esteem, are significant, and may lead to educational and employment outcomes.

These themes and issues are discussed below in the context of the current environment in which ACE operates. Key documents shaping this environment are referred to, particularly the ACE National Policy (1993). In addition, it is important to examine the findings with reference to the 1994 strategy document, *Towards A Skilled Australia*, from the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). Specifically, the topics that will be addressed in this chapter are:

(i) the ACE learning environment.

(ii) who benefits from ACE?

(iii) ACE's contribution to the acquisition of key competency skills and vocational outcomes, and

(iv) quality and ACE education.

Specific recommendations for ACE policy directions are not made in this chapter, although in some instances it is mentioned that there may be a need for ACE to broaden its provision of services.

5.2 THE ACE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

This study showed that there are particular features which attract people to ACE. For example, ACE is accessible, particularly for disadvantaged groups, because most ACE courses do not require pre-requisite qualifications. Additionally, ACE centres provide a supportive learning environment.

The learning environment of an educational provider can be as important as what is actually taught. For example, a 1994 report by Vivienne Ducie, about Western Australian Community Neighbourhood Houses, suggested that members' career and educational pathways were influenced more by the overall learning process and personal development occurring at the Neighbourhood Houses than the actual educational focus.

The results of the *Outcomes and Pathways* study suggest that education provided by the ACE sector should be regarded as having different qualities to that offered by the other providers of education (schools, universities and TAFE colleges). Some participants in the discussion groups perceived that ACE was less intimidating than the formal education system, and some mentioned how they appreciated the friendly atmosphere in ACE classes and how the courses met their learning needs. By having such qualities, ACE attracts particular groups of people; for example women, unemployed people, and people without adequate literacy, numeracy and English speaking skills. Many of these people would have few other opportunities for education, particularly where pre-requisite qualifications are required in order to undertake a course. However, this study shows that people with higher educational qualifications are also attracted to ACE, particularly towards General Adult Education courses.

This study indicates that ACE is special because it encourages people to value learning and to keep on learning. Discussion groups revealed how the formal school system can create negative feelings about learning; some participants mentioned that it is less personal than ACE. This study showed that ACE courses make a significant contribution to building people's self-confidence and that the courses also make education an enjoyable experience. *Towards A Skilled Australia* notes the importance of continuous learning so that workers can adapt to change. The *Outcomes and Pathways* study suggests that the positive learning environment provided by ACE centres is an important factor in encouraging people to participate in continuous learning.

This study suggests that ACE functions as an intermediary in the education system because in addition to its learning goals, ACE:

- provides information to participants about what educational and community services are available.

- develops confidence and has other personal benefits.
- develops skills, particularly those which can be termed 'life' skills, such as English language skills and organisational skills, and
- promotes a positive attitude to learning, particularly ongoing learning.

While such outcomes are important in themselves, this study indicates that for many ACE participants these outcomes provide the key to future opportunities in terms of a job, community work, and further education. In one discussion group, a number of participants who initially had no intention of going on to study at a tertiary institution aimed to reach this goal after finishing their VCE course. It is difficult to achieve vocational outcomes, or indeed any sort of outcome, if people do not feel confident enough to 'have a go' or lack essential skills such as literacy and numeracy.

Apart from ESL students, ACE participants tended to be more highly qualified than the Australian population in general. This suggests that some people enrolling in ACE are seeking opportunities not always available from the formal education system. Some examples might include opportunities for self-development and liberal education (eg. philosophy), and developing practical skills including crafts and computer training. For some older retired persons who participated in the discussion groups, ACE courses helped them to keep their minds active.

5.3 WHO BENEFITS FROM ACE?

A wide variety of outcomes were experienced by people undertaking ACE courses in 1992. This study showed that particular groups of people benefited in particular ways. Outcomes for the following groups of people are discussed below: women, men, young people, people of NESB, early school leavers and unemployed people. Community benefits, such as voluntary work, are also discussed.

5.3.1 Women

Overall, the findings from the questionnaire showed few significant differences between males and females in terms of benefits gained from completing ACE course in 1992. The main differences were that a greater proportion of females reported gaining personal, family and community benefits, while a greater proportion of males reported improvements to their key competency skills. This would be expected given that a higher proportion of males were enrolled in Vocational Education courses while a higher proportion of females were enrolled in General Adult Education. However, the proportion of females reporting improvements to their key competency skills was not a great deal less than males. This indicates that these skills can be gained from doing courses other than those that have a vocational focus.

The discussion groups highlighted the significance of the personal benefits experienced by some women, particularly those who were not in the labour force in 1992. Increased self-confidence and assertiveness came from completing 'general interest' subjects such as sewing and home maintenance. Some women revealed how they were motivated to try new things, were more decisive, or were better able to talk to large groups of people. Both the discussion groups and questionnaire results revealed how some women who learnt a skill or craft for use around the home actually made some extra money from selling their craftwork to friends or family.

ACE assisted women who were looking after children and who were not currently seeking employment by enabling and encouraging them to remain involved in the community. Some women who participated in the discussion groups indicated that they kept up their social skills and improved their decision making abilities through doing ACE courses; such skills would help to make their transition back to the workforce easier. A number of women talked about how they enjoyed the atmosphere of ACE courses, particularly how these courses are adapted to the individual needs of participants.

A greater proportion of males responding to the questionnaire said they improved their capacity to use technology. This was presumably because a greater proportion of males (26 per cent) than females (17 per cent) were enrolled in Vocational Education courses. *Towards A Skilled Australia* (ANTA 1994, p. 20) recognises that employed women do less vocational training than men. According to ANTA's report, one of the main reasons for this is that women comprise 75 per cent of all part time workers, and there are fewer training opportunities for part time workers. Additionally, in many industries women occupy low status and low paying jobs.

Thus, ACE could establish opportunities to increase women's involvement in Vocational Education courses. Flexibility for women needs to be looked at by all the sectors of education, including ACE. This study identified the types of difficulties respondents experienced trying to meet their expectations of the 1992 course[1]. It was found that a greater proportion of females than males reported difficulties due to needing to look after children or other family members, or their work commitments giving them no time to do courses. Thus, Vocational Education courses that run for any significant length of time may be a barrier to women who are trying to juggle work and family responsibilities.

Consultation with women's organisations is proposed in ANTA's strategy document to determine how best to provide women's training needs. The ACE sector is well-placed to participate in these consultations because of the high level of involvement that women have in the sector, as participants, paid workers and volunteers.

The ACE sector may also need to consider how to encourage more women of NESB into ESL courses given that, in 1992, the proportion of men in these courses exceeded the proportion of women. Another consideration is how to encourage women of NESB to enrol in ESL classes at an earlier age; most of the women in the ESL discussion group had waited for their children to reach their mid to late teenage years before they enrolled in English classes. The Adult Migrant Education Services (AMES) provides English language and literacy programs for new arrivals in Australia (ACFEB 1994b). However, there is also a need for English language programs to reach those who have been settled in Australia for longer; ACE has an important role to play in providing such programs.

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[1] **Table A14** shows the numbers and proportions of people reporting the types of difficulties they experienced in meeting their expectations of their 1992 course.

5.3.2 Men

An important finding was the benefits experienced by men involved in adult and community education. Men were shown to gain a great deal from ACE even though the proportion of men enrolled in ACE was small compared to women. Results included:

- a greater proportion of men improved their key competency skills than women, a reflection of their higher participation rate in Vocational Education courses.

- similar proportions of men and women were helped to become better parents and to assist their children with their schooling.

- a high proportion of men indicated they were helped personally.

- a higher proportion of males reported that they improved their language and communication skills, or their literacy and numeracy skills. This reflects the higher proportion of males enrolled in ESL and Adult Basic Education courses in 1992.

Considering the low proportions of men involved in ACE (only 20 per cent of questionnaire respondents were male), and the obvious benefits experienced by those who are involved, the ACE sector could look at how to increase male participation rates. However, care needs to be taken that this is not at the expense of encouraging more women into Vocational Education, ESL and Adult Basic Education courses.

5.3.3 Young people

For the purposes of this report, young people are those aged 15 to 24 years.

In 1991, new national targets were recommended for post-compulsory education (ANTA 1994). This resulted from the recognition that:

- there are now fewer opportunities for those who are unskilled or without post-school qualifications, to find work (ANTA 1994), and

- the increased tendency, particularly since the late 1980s, for young people to stay on to complete Year 12 (ABS 1993b). This has created a need for a number of post-school training and educational options for young people.

This study indicates that ACE is making a significant contribution to improving the skills of young people. Overall, higher proportions of young people reported that they gained key competency skills. However, the proportion of 15 to 24 year olds enrolled in ACE is relatively low; they constituted 7 per cent of all questionnaire respondents. In comparison, almost one half of all participants were aged between 35 to 54 years. The low proportion of young people enrolled in ACE is not unusual given that a large proportion of people in the 15 to 24 year old age group are part of the formal education system. However, a greater proportion of young people could possibly be attracted to the ACE sector to improve their skills and qualifications. For this to happen, ACE may need to be promoted as an option for post-school education and training.

In one discussion group, it was mentioned that a valuable aspect of young people's involvement in ACE was the opportunity it gave them to mix with people of different backgrounds and of different ages, and for experiences to be shared. Such opportunities do not as easily present themselves in schools or universities.

5.3.4 People of non-English speaking background (NESB)

Without adequate English language skills, it is difficult for people to participate fully in the community (ANTA 1994). For instance, people of NESB are recognised as particularly disadvantaged in terms of accessing education, training and employment. The *Outcomes and Pathways* study showed that participants in ACE ESL programs significantly improved their language and communication skills. Improving such skills was shown to have a range of associated outcomes for ESL students:

- the ability to communicate better with their children, and to help them with their schooling, thus improving their relationship with their children.
- increased self-esteem, with family members being proud of their efforts to learn.
- self-reliance, in terms of being able to do day-to-day tasks such as filling in forms and doing the shopping.
- becoming more aware of what community services and information are available.
- being in a better position to find work.

Of those ESL students completing further ACE courses after 1992, a large proportion studied more ESL or Adult Basic Education. This suggests that NESB people are choosing to continue to improve their English language skills and literacy and numeracy through ACE. However, there were low proportions of NESB people enrolled in Vocational Education and Access courses in 1992. The ACE sector may need to examine how NESB people can be encouraged to participate in these other programs, particularly once they have acquired an adequate grasp of the English language.

5.3.5 Early school leavers

A greater proportion of respondents to the questionnaire had post-school qualifications, compared with the general Australian population, with the exception of ESL students. Thus, there may be scope to increase the participation in ACE of adults who have fewer than 12 years of schooling.

Questionnaire results indicated that, overall, people without post-school qualifications improved their skills from doing ACE courses more than those with post-school qualifications. More than one third of those with less than 10 years of schooling improved their language or communication skills, and more than one quarter learnt to work better with others. Additionally, the English literacy discussion group indicated that ACE can result in people with fewer years of education and who may be unaware of their abilities, increasing their self-confidence and becoming motivated to try new things; for example becoming more involved in community activities.

5.3.6 Unemployed people

One of the most significant findings of this study was the extent to which unemployed people improved their skills. It showed ACE to be an important provider of vocational education and training for the unemployed. A high proportion of unemployed people reported improvements or benefits in many areas, including improvements to key competency skills, personal benefits, educational benefits and becoming more involved in the community. ACE caters for the needs of the unemployed, for example, in terms of giving advice and assistance about other courses and training options. Additionally, ACE is a major provider of ESL courses and Adult Basic Education courses. This study indicated that language, literacy and numeracy skills developed in these courses can be an important foundation for improving the prospect of finding work.

ANTA's strategy document recognises that, generally, employees are now better educated and have higher career aspirations. This makes finding employment more competitive. Increasingly, job seekers need to 'sell' themselves to potential employers. In this study, unemployed participants gained a great deal of self-confidence from ACE courses. Self-confidence is vital, enabling job seekers to effectively present their skills to employers and motivating them to keep trying to find work, even when it may prove difficult. Outcomes such as improving self-confidence and becoming more active in the community would also help people to cope with unemployment. An inability to cope with unemployment can often lead to social problems such as ill-health, domestic violence, family breakdown and crime (Langmore & Quiggen, 1994).

One of the discussion groups revealed that some participants believed that employers do not recognise the skills people learn from ACE. It may be that employers do not understand the value of ACE courses, particularly those that are thought of as 'non-vocational'. The ACE National Policy has suggested strategies for:

- the development of a clearer understanding of the benefits of ACE among community, government, institutional and industry providers.

- increased recognition by government for the development and enhancement of ACE provision.

It may also be necessary to raise the profile of ACE with employer groups; this would not only be helpful to ACE participants but would benefit employers themselves since they would be able to utilise the skills people learn from ACE to enhance the performance of their companies.

5.3.7 Community benefits

This study found that ACE can result in benefits to the wider community, for example:

- in some discussion groups, participants indicated that they were helped to understand people from other backgrounds and cultures. In the Mayer report (1992), cultural understanding is regarded as an important foundation for the key competencies of workforce participation. It is also recognised that managers of the twenty-first century should have an understanding of other cultures - particularly of Asian history, traditions and religion (The Boston Consulting Group 1994).

- assisting people trying to overcome isolation by helping them to become more involved in the community, particularly NESB people, and women with young children. Voluntary work, within an adult education centre or with community groups, was reported by a number of participants, particularly the unemployed and people doing ESL courses. Without the assistance of voluntary staff, many community groups would find it difficult to function.

- encouraging individuals to be more aware of and interested in what is happening in their community and in the world.

- improving relationships between family members (half of the respondents reported that they obtained at least one family related outcome).

These community outcomes can result in wider social and economic benefits. For instance, *Come In Cinderella* noted that adult and community education can result in savings to areas such as health and welfare.

5.4 ACE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ACQUISITION OF KEY COMPETENCY SKILLS AND VOCATIONAL OUTCOMES

The *Outcomes and Pathways* study indicates that ACE courses contribute to people's development of what the Mayer report refers to as the 'key competency' skills of workforce participation. Overall, 58 per cent of respondents reported they improved their skills in at least one of the key competency areas as a result of doing an adult education course in 1992. Thus, there were people gaining workforce skills even when they had not intended to use their 1992 course to find a job or to help with the job they were in.

Key competency skills were not only gained by Vocational Education students. Reported improvements to skills were widespread across all courses. For example, improvements to language or communication skills were reported by large numbers of students, especially ESL students, but also by participants across other course areas. It is essential for people to have these skills so they can achieve other goals, for example, finding work or going on to further education. The findings of this study suggest that ACE is well placed to deliver and expand English language, literacy and numeracy programs.

General Adult Education was shown to facilitate improvements to interpersonal skills, such as learning to work better with people. High proportions of Adult Basic Education students (one third) improved their skills, such as becoming better at collecting, organising or using information. Improving the capacity to use technology was reported by over one half of Vocational Education students, and was reported most often by students aged 35 to 44 years.

These findings indicate that vocational outcomes can occur across the full range of ACE programs, including General Adult Education. Skills may be improved even when this is not the primary aim of a particular course; for example, a consequence of a person doing a craft course could be that it helps them make decisions (decision making and thinking skills are regarded as a key competency).

Come In Cinderella recognised the need to address the 'whole person' when seeking to achieve learning outcomes. The *Outcomes and Pathways* study has shown that ACE courses do not simply seek to provide unemployed participants with vocational skills. To a certain extent this would be fruitless because unemployment is the result of many factors, not just a lack of skills. It may also result from poor self-esteem, language or communication difficulties, an inability to process information and limited financial resources. ACE addresses these other factors.

48 per cent of unemployed people said that they learnt skills to help them find jobs or start their own businesses as a result of doing the 1992 course. The proportion was highest for unemployed people undertaking Vocational Education courses with 65 per cent reporting this outcome. Even 38 per cent of unemployed General Adult Education students experienced this outcome. These could all be considered good results, particularly given that there was a recession in 1992.

Employment outcomes were defined fairly narrowly on the questionnaire, mainly in terms of paid employment. This study, particularly the discussion groups, showed that there were other employment related outcomes. For example, there were some people (particularly women) who learnt a skill or craft and then made some extra money by selling their craftwork to family or friends. Additionally, there were people who said they felt more capable of finding a job because their skills had increased.

5.5 QUALITY AND ACE EDUCATION

The provision of a quality service to participants in the education system has received increased attention in recent years. ANTA's strategy document identifies enhanced quality in vocational education and training as a key objective, as does the ACE National Policy. Although this study did not measure quality directly, it does indicate that ACE is providing a quality service. This study has been a means of assessing student satisfaction. The following findings indicate that students are satisfied with ACE:

- a high proportion of questionnaire respondents have gone on and completed further ACE courses since 1992.

- most people indicated that they have found the ACE courses they have completed since 1990 very helpful.
- ACE is catering particularly well for disadvantaged groups (see section 5.3).
- people's expectations of ACE courses are generally being met. However, 22 per cent of unemployed people expected to be helped to find a job or start their own business, but reported they were not helped in this regard. This result may reflect the poor state of the economy in 1992, which made finding work difficult.

Student satisfaction with ACE evident from this study was reflected in the findings of the report *Snapshots: A statistical profile of adult students and their opinions*. A survey was completed by 1,800 adult and community education participants in Victoria; 87 per cent of respondents reported that they were satisfied with the course they were doing (1994, p. 13).

5.6 SUMMARY

The *Outcomes and Pathways* study has been successful in discovering more about ACE, how it has particular qualities which attract participants, and how it benefits participants. There has been increased pressure for all sectors of education to demonstrate vocational outcomes, and to provide more vocational education and training. This study has shown that participants in a variety of ACE courses have gained vocational, or 'key competency', skills.

However, just to focus on vocational outcomes does not recognise the uniqueness of ACE in terms of the diversity of its provision. While some people expect to gain skills specifically for the workforce, there are others who simply want some time to themselves or to interact socially with others. However, through attending ACE courses these people may develop the confidence to go on to further study, voluntary work or paid work. Without confidence, without literacy, numeracy and language skills, people cannot be expected to develop workforce skills or go on to further education. In this way, ACE provides opportunities to those who are disadvantaged in their community; opportunities that are often not available from other types of education providers.

PART TWO

THE TEN INDIVIDUAL DISCUSSION GROUPS

Findings for the individual discussion groups are presented below, under the following headings:

- the participants.
- expectations of the course.
- were expectations of the course met?
- outcomes.
- were there any unexpected benefits from the course?

Centres are not mentioned by name in order to maintain confidentiality of those participants who attended. Instead, the centres are referred to as 'NSW 1', 'NSW 2' etc.

NSW 1

Course: Writing Skills

The participants

The participants in this group discussion consisted of five men and five women. Most were aged between thirty and fifty five. The class was divided into two types of participants: those who had done an 8 week course (2 hours per week) with regular writing practice, while the second group had done a two day intensive course with little writing practice.

Expectations of the course

Four people, three of whom had done the two day course, wanted to be able to earn some money out of writing.

Five others wanted to produce one - sometimes more - articles for various low circulation, specialist magazines. They usually had an idea in mind for this article, but were aware of the need to improve their writing ability to be successful.

All participants wanted to be able to talk to and be instructed by someone who knew how to write. Three had chosen the course because of the respect they had for the tutor.

Almost all saw the course as a vehicle for providing them with an opportunity to discuss writing with other aspiring writers and to get support for *"doing something you do in isolation and can be quite a lonely pre-occupation."*

The expectations weren't always solely related to writing goals. One man also did the course to learn teaching techniques, while a retired man did the course to 'exercise his mind' and have some social contact with 'interesting people'.

Were expectations of the course met?

There was general agreement that the course had been a catalyst to achieving some goal they had with their writing or with their other expectations. However, the participants who had done the two day intensive course had some misgivings about the course as they didn't have a chance to practice their writing.

Those who did the 8 week course found it to be very beneficial, with many stating that their expectations were exceeded. The social aspect of people's expectations (that is, meeting others with the same interests, getting support, inspiration and motivation) was also evident for those who did the longer course. Many of these participants said that their self-confidence had increased and their writing skills were greatly improved as a result of doing the course.

One person has used the teaching techniques, learnt at the course, in various courses he has subsequently set up at another centre.

Outcomes

Three participants have had articles published in low circulation specialist magazines, as they'd hoped. Another three have persevered with writing and hope to get something published in the future. All six came from the eight week course. Up until the completion of the course, none of the participants had any work published.

The eight week course helped provide the participants with motivation and the discipline to write. For example, the participant who has written the greatest number of published magazine articles lives in the country and is a mother of two children. During her initial efforts, her family believed that they still had the right to make their usual demands on her time. She found she had to get across to them that certain allocated times were her time and what she was doing was useful and not something for her to do during her 'spare' time (which, she considered, would never have eventuated, given her commitments). Subsequently, she has progressed with her writing to the point where she now has a regular column in a magazine.

The longer course is also credited with giving the participants the confidence to achieve, thereby taking away what some referred to as 'the fear of writing.' A woman who has had articles published in magazines commented that *"a lot of people keep doing courses and maybe become part of some support groups, but never become writers as they hardly do any writing. They are prevented by fear from really making a go of it."*

Were there any unexpected benefits from the course?

Techniques to get around writers' block were mentioned as something valuable some had learnt which they did not expect. Additionally, those who did the eight week course became more confident and more knowledgeable about how to approach publishers.

For one participant, the course led him to conclude that his talents were really in the stockmarket rather than in writing.

A number of participants reported that the course gave them a chance to compare their stage of development against others and therefore gave them an idea of how much they needed to improve. Some mentioned that *"it was a relief to discover that others in the course were beginners like me, with the same questions as me."* They therefore felt more comfortable in the class and overcame their initial feelings of inadequacy.

NSW 2

Course: Calligraphy

The participants

The discussion group consisted of five women. Two (who were both retired) were aged in their sixties. Three were aged in their mid thirties or early forties. Of these, two were employed and one unemployed.

The group was made up of women with diverse experiences in using calligraphy. One had done quite a lot, involving over three years of study, while another, recently retired, had done very little due to other commitments.

Expectations of the course

The expectations of the course were generally practical. Many did calligraphy for their own benefit and enjoyment and as a way of enhancing their skills and gaining a deeper appreciation of the craft. Also, they saw that doing a course would act as motivation to devote more time to the craft.

None of the participants did the course to earn added income from their craft although they were aware of the possibility of earning 'the occasional dollar' from time to time when offered by friends, family or perhaps a local business.

While formal education was seen as an intimidating prospect to some of the participants, *"ACE courses are good as you don't need any qualifications and so forth to be able to do a course. That has opened up opportunities to people who otherwise would not have done anything."* One of the retired women added that it was important for retired people to keep their minds active and to have interests and ACE courses can provide this.

Were expectations of the course met?

As their expectations were practical in nature, the participants had achieved all of their expectations.

Outcomes

One woman had stopped working at the time of the course but had since begun working again in her own business. While this outcome was not attributable to the course, she said that having done calligraphy had been useful to her work as it helped her to concentrate better, she is now more focussed.

Another woman has contemplated being able to sell her work at the local market and may do so at a later date.

Three of the women had earned 'the occasional dollar', preparing menus at restaurants or privately for friends. While four of the participants said that there were many personal benefits from doing calligraphy, there were spin-off benefits in that they could do it for family and friends through doing Christmas and birthday cards, twenty first birthdays, wedding invitations and the like. It was clear that the women appreciated the opportunity to do this.

One participant, a primary school teacher, has used her skills to help her students complete a school project, and also to assist a voluntary organisation that she is involved in.

All participants mentioned that their interest in the artform has increased and they take an increased interest in its various manifestations. They can now more critically assess their own and others' work. Three participants have continued to work at their art by doing further calligraphy courses. One of these has followed up an interest in old manuscripts by doing a historical study. Another has also been contemplating doing the same thing.

Three have gone on to do ACE courses other than calligraphy. The woman looking at old manuscripts is contemplating studying calligraphy at TAFE to become an accredited teacher. One participant said that *"adult education becomes a habit where you can learn and keep learning. You can never stop learning."*

Were there any unexpected benefits from the course?

The women and, later, their friends and families, have come to appreciate that calligraphy is an art form which requires considerable patience and skill. At first they hadn't had this appreciation.

The 'discipline' required to do the art, which has stemmed from doing the course, has led to four of these women believing that they are now better able to concentrate on issues in their daily lives, although some were unaware of this until it was raised in the interview. For these women it was a *"Now that you mention it..."* experience. They also pointed to calligraphy as being a way to relax and relieve stress. *"Time really flies when you're doing it. It's just like meditation."*

Family members took some time before they recognised that the women needed peace and quiet and time to devote to their art, but are now more accommodating as they appreciate what their spouse/parent is achieving. One participant said that her husband now even brings her a cup of tea when she is doing her calligraphy. Some of their children also show an interest in learning the art.

The women said that they appreciate the compliments they receive from their family and friends, many of whom keep as souvenirs the cards the women have produced using their calligraphy skills.

One woman, who had recently moved into the area, mentioned that doing the course became a handy way of meeting people.

NSW 3

Course: Needlecraft and sewing courses

The participants

The discussion group was held with six women present. Four were aged in their thirties. The other two women were older with one having retired. Most were married and had children and were 'regular' course takers. Two had done regular ACE courses for almost 10 years.

Expectations of the course

The common themes which emerged were that ACE courses, in general, were considered to be both very practical and enjoyable. So, for most of the participants, doing ACE courses has become a matter of 'what to do next year'.

Generally, the women hadn't thought about getting a job or starting a business after doing the course, as there wasn't the time and they had enough family commitments without taking on more. One participant however, planned to use her skills to earn an income by setting up a small business and was funded by the CES to do an intensive business course to aid her with this quest. Another planned to help her daughter who had her own drapery business. Both these women had older age or adult children, compared to the others who had younger children.

The needlecraft courses were seen as practical and the women expected the course would involve preparing various garments for themselves and for their families, particularly children. The ability to do this at low cost and being able to design clothing in the styles and materials they wanted, when they wanted, was also seen as important.

Doing the course was also regarded as a sort of discipline to achieve something. *"You've got two hours to do it, so you get it done. Otherwise you'd um and aah about it and put it off until another time."*

ACE was seen by some as important in allowing women, in particular, to extend themselves and keep their minds active when the responsibility of children and spouses might result in them *"giving so much of themselves that they loose their identity."*

The networking aspect of the course was regarded as important, not only for 'new' arrivals to the town. Some participants knew each other quite well and had done other courses together. The ACE courses are seen to be a good reason to get out of the house and to have a break from the family. The courses were partly a social event; a chance to have *"a good chat in a relaxed atmosphere"* while being productive and improving their skills. One woman described doing the courses as *"our equivalent to the boys' night out at the pub."*

Were expectations of the course met?

Because many were regular course takers, the participants had a very good idea of what they could achieve from the course. Therefore their expectations were met.

The woman who hoped to go into business and another who wanted to help her daughter with her drapery business, did not achieve their goals, although they said that the course had provided them with a lot of personal benefits. The woman who hoped to establish a small needlecraft business said that it was *"more work to get something like this off the ground than I could cope with."* She thought, however, that it was fortunate that she discovered this rather than after setting up the business.

Outcomes

There was a greater awareness of what was required to succeed in this line of business. One woman said that *"You need to sell something different. Something unique that will catch people's eye."* One woman admitted (with others agreeing) to assessing what there is for sale in shops and comparing her own work with the sale items; often favourably.

Many had done some work for friends for money but didn't regard this as a money making operation. It was more a matter of friends approaching them from time to time.

Two had attended TAFE in some capacity (either to further their skills or to do book-keeping). Many said they preferred doing the ACE courses because of the social side of the courses and the greater adaptability of the courses to the needs of the person. *"You get to make the clothes you want. In TAFE we all produced the same [garment] in the same size."*

Two participants are now volunteers at the centre which offered the sewing courses. In the past, they had done a lot of courses and had come to know those working in the centre. When volunteers were required to help out, they considered themselves to be 'next in line'.

An important aspect of the ACE courses was the opportunity to share skills and knowledge with other participants. If one of them wanted help with some needlecraft task they were unfamiliar or not confident with, they got help from a classmate.

Were there any unexpected benefits from the course?

One person mentioned (and others agreed) that their children, spouses and friends are now more appreciative of their sewing skills since completing the course. This acknowledgment was recognised as being important for improving their self-image and self-esteem.

Both of the women who intended to be involved in a business said they developed personally by becoming more *"my own person"* after doing the course. One of these mentioned that, in the past, she had found it frustrating dealing with all the things she encountered in her life. By doing the course, she became more confident and satisfied with herself and had learnt to make choices, decide on priorities in her life and had felt better about making those choices.

A number of the women believed that greater opportunities for personal development, as a consequence of the course, would occur when their children, who are a demand on their time, are older.

Victoria 1

Course: Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) English

The participants

The participants comprised five women and two men whose ages ranged from the late twenties to the late fifties. For most, this was not the first VCE subject that they had studied at the centre.

Expectations of the course

The main expectation of the group was to pass VCE English. However, some were aiming to obtain the VCE and had completed a number of other subjects. Two of the younger participants had recently failed the Higher School Certificate (the predecessor of VCE), whereas a number of the older participants had left school before Year 12 and wanted to finish the last years of secondary education.

Many of the older participants wanted to complete their VCE by doing one subject at a time, whereas two of the younger participants wanted to complete VCE quickly and move on to tertiary study. Four older participants were less certain of where passing VCE English would lead; they wanted to pass the subject as a challenge in itself or study the subject because of their interest in its content. One older participant said that she hoped to go on and study theology at university.

Two of the younger participants had previously tried to get into a tertiary course under mature age entry but had not been accepted. They felt that they had to study more VCE subjects to show that they were serious about study and to have a better chance of being offered a place at a tertiary institution.

None of the participants had expectations about getting a job afterwards.

Almost all of the participants expected to improve their communication skills, in particular their written skills, by doing the course.

Were expectations of the course met?

Many of the participants have now completed and passed VCE English. Two have gone on to tertiary study and another two are involved in voluntary work. *"Now, through adult education, we can do things that we weren't able to do before* [at a younger age]. [At the time] *we were set on a certain pathway and it depended on your socio-economic background what pathway you were going to take. We were told we had to do only certain things and behave in certain ways and we missed out on everything else."*

Six participants stated that they had improved their communication and written skills through doing the course. Two reported that they had developed very useful research skills which had made their transition to tertiary education easier.

Outcomes

Two have experienced some sort of vocational outcome, although none had this as an expectation of the course at the beginning. One woman is now able to write letters better for her husband's business. One man has recently applied for a job doing clerical work and one of the requirements was to have VCE. *"So it helps to have it."*

Two participants became involved in voluntary work after finishing the course. One is now reading newspapers to people needing rehabilitation from strokes or other debilitating illnesses. Another is teaching English to migrants and intends to become involved in her grandchildren's school by reading to the children.

Two participants built up more confidence in their public speaking from having to stand up and speak in front of the English class. This has led to them being more involved in the community. One is the person now reading newspapers to the incapacitated, as described in the previous paragraph. Another had been on various committees but felt she could never take on the secretarial role because she did not feel confident. Now she believes she can perform this function.

Initially, only three participants had the goal of going on and doing a tertiary course. Now, two are studying at a tertiary institution and another four aim to reach this goal. One of the two participants who had previously applied unsuccessfully for tertiary entrance has subsequently achieved their goal.

Only one of the seven was doing no form of study in 1994. However, she plans to return to study in 1995.

A woman, who had a young child at the time of the course, said that she had lost confidence in her social skills at that time of her life stating that *"You* [can] *get alienated when you have a family."* However, now she can enter into discussions that she wouldn't have before.

Two noted that their families are proud of the progress they have made with their study, even though one person's family at the beginning had tried to convince him that he wasn't capable of doing a course. Another person had been told by acquaintances that she was too old to study. A woman with school age children said *"If you haven't got a qualification, you're just mum and that's all."*

Were there any unexpected benefits from the course?

All of the participants mentioned that they had experienced an increase in self-confidence and a few stated specifically that this was unexpected (with others murmuring agreement). The increase in self-confidence that participants have experienced has enabled them to go on to become involved in voluntary work, undertake tertiary study or develop better social skills.

A growing determination to achieve was an unexpected outcome expressed by one person: *"I thought 'I can do this' and it was a challenge, a challenge I was willing to take on* *because I believed in myself. We've all got that determination to achieve. It's given me tremendous confidence."* Four participants who had no initial desire to go on to tertiary study are now aiming to do so.

The nature of adult education in encouraging people to learn was commented upon. *"It's the freedom. You are not restricted. You are not punished for anything. You are treated like an adult. It is a good atmosphere."* Another commented that *"It is a comfortable learning environment. Everybody was friendly and co-operative."* And also *"People can be themselves. You were accepted exactly as you were. Nobody cared about what you did for a living."*

There was a general agreement that studying at an ACE centre was more personal compared to studying at secondary school and also, according to one person, compared to the tertiary institution he is attending.

Doing the course is credited with helping participants widen their horizons. *"If you do a course you become more interested* [in the world around you] *and you become a more interesting person. It's like having the blinkers taken off.* [Before the course] *I found I was sinking into the soap powder and nappy group."*

By meeting people of varied backgrounds and hearing different points of view, ideas and opinions, there was general agreement among participants that they have developed a tolerance of people from different backgrounds. For example, studying with mature aged people was an experience for younger participants because of the different ideas, life experiences, and input these people put into the course. *"There was an interchange of ideas and opinions. They* [the younger participants] *accepted the older participants. It was a wonderful atmosphere* [in which to study]."

A person, who described himself as a loner, said that he has retained the friendship of some people he first met while doing courses at the centre.

Victoria 2

Course: English as a Second Language (ESL)

The participants

Seven women and two men were participants in the discussion group. Six of the women were born in Europe, while one was born in Latin America. Three of these had lived in Australia for over twenty years but had not been motivated to learn English because they had mixed socially either with family members or others who spoke their language. Both men were born in Vietnam. Most participants were aged in their forties or fifties.

Most of the women had waited for their children to reach their mid to late teenage years before they enrolled in English classes. They felt that they should put their children first and, only when the children were more independent did the women feel they had the time and inclination.

Expectations of the course

The main expectation of all participants was to improve their ability to speak or read English, but their reasons for doing so varied.

One participant had a job as a labourer and didn't need much English on the job but, when the recession came, he was retrenched and so was hoping to improve his chances of getting another job by becoming more proficient in English.

Before one woman enrolled to do the course, she had a part time job at a school, and performed some basic translating for parents and teachers. However, her written English and reading weren't good. She believed that the English course would help with her job. *"You need to attend a class because, on your own, you learn to speak English incorrectly."* Another woman had done an English correspondence course, but this wasn't satisfying because she preferred the class environment where there is support and immediate feedback for mistakes.

One woman wanted to do a TAFE course but found that her lack of English prevented her from doing this.

The women who had been in the country for over twenty years and had not learnt English found that they became more isolated when friends left the local area and their children either left home or spent less time at home.

Five of the women mentioned that a desire to communicate with their children (or their children's spouses) was one factor motivating them to do a course. The children were either able to understand their mother's preferred language but usually answered back in English, or they could barely understand or speak their mothers' language at all. As a consequence, the women felt that their children thought that they were unintelligent and an embarrassment to them in public. In most instances, their children put pressure on them to learn English. This pressure was seen as providing them with motivation. *"It was good because you say 'I'll go' but you never do. You always find an excuse not to start. One day I got the courage."*

Before doing the course, some had felt insecure and lacked confidence out in the community because of their lack of English. They were embarrassed when they were not able to communicate well in shops and when they had to write notes, cheques and fill out forms. Only by learning English could they overcome this.

Were expectations of the course met?

Each participant, with one exception, was satisfied with the progress they had made. The participant who was not satisfied had not been able to attend some classes because of the illness of a family member, although he said that he had made good progress in written rather than spoken English.

The participants are now able to look after personal and daily things far better than before. For some, doing day to day things like using the telephone or going shopping isn't as threatening as it used to be. *"When you can't communicate to people you are somehow lost in your own self. So many things fall apart, but when you gain this* [ability], *everything improves. Personally I am thankful I can learn. It is an opportunity for me."*

The participants were happy that they were able to communicate better with their children and that their children no longer felt embarrassed by them in public. In fact, their children were proud of the progress the parents had made in learning English. For instance, one woman whose daughter had felt embarrassed at having to translate at parent-teacher evenings, was now quite happy for her mother to come to these meetings.

Despite their achievements, all were keen to keep improving their English. *"We can never be perfect. You can learn for all your life."* The importance of practice or continuing with studying English was stressed, with participants giving examples of people who, through lack of practice, had forgotten their English soon after finishing a course.

Outcomes

Two participants who were unemployed at the time of the course believe that they will be more successful at finding work because of their improved language skills.

Three participants said that they are now doing voluntary work; one is a member of the Multicultural Women's Group at the neighbourhood house, another is helping out at her child's school, and a third is assisting the Red Cross.

One of those doing voluntary work is also doing a TAFE course. One person can now help his adult son whose English is not as good as his.

Most of the participants have continued with their ESL studies at the neighbourhood house, with some doing an Extended English course. Three are studying the General Certificate of Education (a Year 10 equivalent). Others are doing courses at other centres, many of which they found out about from the neighbourhood house. Others were doing a computer course at another community centre, an English course with the CES or various courses through Skillshare and Jobshare.

Most reported that their self-esteem had increased a great deal as a result of doing the course. Three of the women said that they now don't need an interpreter for most situations. Two people reported that they can now fill out forms.

The women said that they are more interested in what is happening around them and do not feel as isolated as before. One woman described this feeling as being 'free'. *"You listen more to what is happening around you, such as understanding the news on television. Without proper English you are restricted. You are scared to come out."*

Were there any unexpected benefits from the course?

Two people mentioned that they now feel confident about talking to people in English whereas, before, they felt inadequate.

The participants can now converse with people from cultures other than their own because they have a common language in English. *"You can make friends with people of other nationalities. It's very interesting. You come to understand people from other cultures."*

Victoria 3

Course: Computing

The participants

The interview participants consisted of three women and two men. All had done the Introduction to Computers course, except for one who did Introduction to Business Computing. Most were aged about 50 or older.

Expectations of the course

Three were seeking some sort of vocational outcome from the course. Two women hoped that it would help them find work, with one stressing that it was important to keep in touch with the latest computer software. One man hoped that the course would help him with his current job, commenting that *"you have to keep up with the kids now."* He said that when he was asked at work if he could use a computer, he replied that he *"didn't have a clue."*

Of the other two, a woman did the course because she had a computer at home which belonged to her son and she wanted to get something out of it for herself. The other person said he did the course to be better at computer games.

Were expectations of the course met?

Four people expressed some disappointment with the course as they hadn't learnt what they expected to learn. One woman felt that the Introduction to Business Computing was not orientated towards business. Another person felt that the Introduction to Computing course did not cover what is needed to get a job.

Two participants obtained some sort of vocational outcome from the course, as described below.

Outcomes

Although all of the participants except one expressed some disappointment with the courses, most experienced positive outcomes in one form or other.

Of the two women who wanted to get a job, one went on to do another computer course in Sydney and gained employment in an advertising agency. She has since come back to Victoria and is currently looking for work. The other woman is still looking for work. She expressed frustration that what is learnt in computer courses quickly becomes out of date.

The man who was already employed said that, although he has not really had the opportunity to use what he learnt in the course, he now understands computer jargon and can talk to one of his bosses about computer technology.

Four of the participants have retained an interest in computers, either by doing further computer courses at ACE centres, using computers at home, or being able to understand the technical jargon. One woman said that the course had assisted her to help her grandchildren use computers.

Were there any unexpected benefits from the course?

None of the participants specifically mentioned any benefits which they regarded as unexpected.

Victoria 4

Course: English literacy classes

The participants

Two women and three men from a range of literacy and numeracy courses were participants in the discussion group. Four of the participants were in their thirties. Two were in the paid workforce. Two participants had previously done a TAFE English course, but for the others this was their first course since leaving school.

Expectations of the course

The main expectation of all participants was to improve their ability to read and write English. The three males did the course to achieve some type of vocational outcome. One sought to enhance his work as a baker, while two wanted to improve their chances of finding employment. One participant commented *"As soon as you tell employers that you have problems with reading and writing, they just don't want to know you."*

Both women enrolled primarily so they could read to their children and help them with their spelling. One mentioned that it was an embarrassment when her children wanted help with spelling and she had to keep making excuses as to why she 'didn't have time' to help. The women also did the course so they could pronounce certain words correctly and learn their meaning.

One of the men had also been developing an interest in helping disabled children and wanted to be able to further this interest. He also wanted to coach kids in sport and, to do this, he needed to be able to read the rule books and coaching manuals.

Were expectations of the course met?

All participants were satisfied with the progress they had made. The women are now better able to help their children with their reading and writing as well as being more confident and proficient in reading and writing themselves. However, two participants said that their spelling had not shown much improvement.

The participant who wanted to be involved with disabled children and in coaching children in sport is now actively involved in these activities.

Three participants obtained some sort of vocational outcome from the course, as described below.

Outcomes

Most participants directly attributed the outcomes listed below to their increased literacy skills and the increased confidence they obtained through doing the ACE course(s).

Of the two participants in paid employment, the man who works in a bakery can now read recipes, while the woman reported that her improved reading has helped her at work.

One participant now reads books and has taught her children how to use the dictionary.

One participant, who could read but had problems with writing, can now sit for examinations. He was able to take the written examination for a truck licence, which he attained. This examination was organised through the ACE course he was doing. Subsequently, he was able to get work as a truck driver. He said of the course, *"It's given me the willpower to do something."*

One participant has gone on to do a similar course at TAFE, which included the use of computers. He has used this knowledge when working as a volunteer helping disabled students during their computer class. He said that he can now get a job reference from the ACE centre because of this work. *"I wanted to do more because of the course. I think I'm in a good position to teach these kids because I know, from my own experience, what the difficulties are in learning."* In addition, he is now coaching a sports team and he eventually hopes to become an umpire.

One woman, who was reluctant to begin her course, now intends to do volunteer work in the centre's office, having been told that her communication skills are good.

Two participants have gone on to do further literacy courses, and one woman began VCE English in 1993. Two participants have done computer courses while another intends to enrol in computer courses.

Were there any unexpected benefits from the course?

One of the participants mentioned that, on the day of their first literacy course, a latecomer walked into the room and announced *"So! Obviously I'm not the only idiot* [in this town] *."* This statement summed up the relief that many felt that there were others in the same position as themselves and they need not feel embarrassed. This was important as some had very negative memories of their time in school as children.

One woman did not expect to achieve as much as she did on the course. *"The more courses you do the more confidence you get. The hardest thing is walking through this door the first time and that's a major leap for someone who basically sits at home with the kids. I know now there are people in the same situation as I am in. With reading and writing I wouldn't even try. Now I'll ask people* [for help when required]*."*

Unexpected benefits for one man were that he was able to write a story, fill out forms and prepare a resume.

South Australia 1

Course: Decisions

The participants

The participants consisted of five women aged in their twenties or thirties. All had children who were attending preschool or primary school. The participants came from two separate Decisions courses, with one of the courses being specifically directed at Latin American women. Three of the participants were women from a Latin American background. These women were provided with an interpreter for the discussion group.

Expectations of the course

The main expectations of participants were to learn how to budget, improve their cooking and to meet people. The latter was particularly important to women who had felt trapped and isolated being at home with young children. *"I needed to expand and get away from the children* [from time to time]."

One woman, who had recently left work to raise her children, wanted to find out about and get more involved in her local community, and to broaden her interests and skills. Another participant thought the course would help her to make decisions without feeling guilty.

Were expectations of the course met?

All expectations mentioned above, including those in terms of course content, and making friends, were met. The Latin American women, whose main reason for participating in the course was to meet people, were surprised and pleased with how much they were able to learn which was useful in their daily lives.

Outcomes

Three women are now participating in voluntary work either at their children's schools by working in the canteen and library, interpreting for Spanish speaking parents, being in the school council, and reading to children. Another woman wants to form a support group for the Latin American women in her local area. She, like others in the group, stressed that she would not have had the confidence to contemplate doing this had it not been for the Decisions course. She had always been at home feeling that *"I was too frightened to go out."*

Four of the women have done further ACE courses at the centre, either craft courses or Stepping Stones (a course which builds on the Decisions course). Two others have kept in contact with the centre through attending the Mothers and Babies Group. One found out, through the centre, that a larger ACE centre was offering a Child Behaviour course and they chose to attend this course. One woman commented that she prefers the courses offered at smaller ACE centres which are more practical and one-on-one in contrast to courses run by large ACE centres or TAFE, which she perceives to be more theoretical.

All of the women intend to continue with ACE or other courses including home maintenance, sewing, ESL, interpreter training and computer courses.

All the Latin American women reported that the course, which was their first ACE course, gave them the confidence to be more involved in the community in terms of speaking to neighbours and teachers, and assisting them with shopping and other daily tasks. The course had improved their English as well.

The course had a particularly strong impact on one woman who said it had helped her regain her confidence after having left work to raise children. She obtained her driver's licence, set and achieved her goal of owning her own house, extended her family day care business, started doing voluntary work at her child's school, and she has completed more ACE courses.

Were there any unexpected benefits from the course?

Many of the outcomes listed above were also unexpected benefits from doing the course.

Four women reported an increase in confidence after doing the course which they said had previously diminished when they left the workforce to raise children. One woman discovered that her child did not suffer if he was not with her all the time, while, for her, *"Having that time away from my child kept my sanity."* Another said that her relationship with her children had improved since doing the course.

The Latin American women were surprised by how much they had learnt. They said they had felt trapped in their culture because of their poor English language skills before enrolling in the course. At times, during the course, they had to communicate with people who couldn't speak their language but didn't find this threatening. In fact, they really enjoyed the experience.

South Australia 2

Course: Home maintenance

The participants

There were seven women in the discussion group. Most were aged either in their thirties or in their fifties. Five were not in the labour force and two were unemployed. Three were sole parents.

Expectations of the course

The main expectation of all participants was to learn about home maintenance. Their aim was to save money and build up the confidence to tackle maintenance jobs at home.

Each of the sole parents wanted (or needed) to become as self-sufficient as possible. They wanted either to be able to do the maintenance work themselves and know what to ask for in hardware stores or, when hiring tradespeople, to minimise the possibility of being overcharged.

The other participants either wanted to take over the role of being responsible for home maintenance because their partners were not competent in this area, or to gain an understanding of the jobs that their partners were working on. They also wanted to take a more active role when getting quotes from tradespeople.

Were expectations of the course met?

All participants mentioned that they had gained the required knowledge from the course. Two women had been apprehensive about beginning the course, but all reported success either in tackling home maintenance jobs themselves, in giving their partners or friends help or advice, in saving money, or in understanding what is involved. Two specifically reported that they now are more confident talking to tradespersons about quotes for jobs around the house. They said that they now would like to know more about the subject. One participant commented that she had advised her friends about tiling.

Outcomes

One woman reported that she has recently done her own tiling in the bathroom and toilet and has been able to patch up holes in the walls and doors of her home.

The two participants who were unemployed are now involved in voluntary work either in community centres or in their children's schools. One woman is a committee member in a support group for infertile people. The unemployed women spoke of the difficulty of getting a job, believing that employers are not interested in 'older people', nor those whose main work experience is as a volunteer. *"We would have to be the most educated unemployed around. I have a whole book of certificates."*

The ACE courses were seen as a positive way of alleviating the disappointment of being knocked back for jobs by employers. *"Just doing the home maintenance course gave me the confidence in that I've achieved something that I haven't done before. So I can go on and achieve other things that I want."*

Speaking about the benefit of adult education generally, one participant commented that *"Years ago, I'd go to a course, and I'd sit there and somebody would say something and I'd just about run out the room...but your confidence builds up."*

One woman is now studying law at a tertiary institution. She has been studying part time for the last two years and would like to do more courses at the centre but her studies take up most of her spare time. One participant did Introduction to Community Services at TAFE and another is doing Human Resources at TAFE; both are hoping to improve their prospects of finding work as a result.

Four of the women are now regular course attendees at ACE centres, having studied such courses as accounting, computers, assertiveness, stress management, and relaxation. Three have become involved with groups at the centre such as the Women and Well-being Group or the Environment Group.

Were there any unexpected benefits from the course?

All of the women state that they now know more about their community and what services and courses are available.

Three people mentioned how they had found out about other ACE courses and groups which are either run at the centre or elsewhere.

Adult education as a means of learning was commented upon. The participants within the group were very encouraging of each other which helped the learning process, even though friendships didn't continue after the course.

One woman reported becoming closer with her partner because they can now discuss home maintenance issues together.

ADDENDUM: Victoria 5

Course: Keyboarding

The information below was not obtained through a discussion group. Instead, the participants were interviewed over the telephone due to only two being available to attend the centre for the scheduled group discussion and no substitute day being suitable.

The participants

Five women and one man were interviewed over the telephone.

Expectations of the course

The main expectation of all participants was to learn to type, but their reasons for doing so varied.

Three participants required this skill to enable them to find a job, while another, who was already employed, was seeking an office job. The remaining two people were interested in home computers, with one woman wanting to learn because the family was about to purchase a computer. Her husband was a 'computer expert' and her children were learning how to use computers at school, so she didn't want to be left out. The remaining participant wanted to improve his typing because using his personal computer was one of his hobbies.

Were expectations of the course met?

Each participant except one believed that they learnt as much as they had expected. One person was disappointed with her progress but stated that this was due to her not having a keyboard at home to practice on.

Two out of the four participants who were seeking some sort of vocational outcome achieved their goal, as described below.

Outcomes

Of the three who completed the keyboarding course to enable them to get a job, one achieved this aim. This person reported that she had done the course as soon as she left school and was now using her keyboarding skills for her job. She is now a fast typist having never typed before doing the course. One of those who is still unemployed has repeated the keyboarding course to increase her speed.

The other person who wanted to get a job is now studying astrology at the centre which she enjoys a lot more than the keyboarding class. She was involved in a Commonwealth Rehabilitation Scheme following an accident and was required by the scheme to complete the keyboarding course as well as a bookkeeping course. Because of the introductory nature of the keyboarding course, she did not feel that completing it had made her in any way more competitive in the job market.

The person who was already employed did get an office job, although her typing skills have not been required or used in that job.

One person, who had been educated at home because of a permanent disability, had never experienced 'formal' education. After studying various courses at the ACE centre, this person has subsequently developed the confidence to enrol at a TAFE college. Further to this, he set up his own 'cottage industry' after the course, but it proved to be unsuccessful.

Were there any unexpected benefits from the course?

There were two unexpected benefits. The participant who enrolled in the astrology class after completing the keyboarding course did not anticipate this. Another person who went on to attend TAFE did not expect this at the time he enrolled in the keyboarding course.

TABLE A1. IMPROVEMENT IN SKILLS RESULTING FROM 1992 COURSE BY HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Improvement in skills(a)	*Not completed Year 10*	*Year 10*	*Secondary School Certificate*	*Trade certificate/ Apprenticeship*	*Other Certificate(b)*	*Diploma or equivalent(c)*	*Bachelor degree*	*Post graduate qualifications*	*Total(d)*
NUMBER									
I learnt to make better use of my time at work or during study	34	66	65	12	49	27	18	8	291
I learnt to work better with people	78	105	82	17	79	34	26	17	459
I learnt how to better collect or organise or use information	58	102	109	14	79	46	25	22	465
I became better at running a household (eg. budgeting, organising household tasks)	32	39	18	4	23	14	6	2	142
I improved my language or communication skills	102	115	84	22	66	54	42	21	529
I learnt to do better at maths/numeracy	19	23	9	4	16	4	2	1	85
I was able to use technology better	35	66	56	9	60	37	28	15	311
I improved my decision making and thinking skills	60	95	85	22	89	45	16	9	441
Other skills	52	101	132	23	151	79	86	71	710
Course did not help improve my skills	18	29	39	5	38	16	12	14	176
Total	**284**	**435**	**435**	**91**	**441**	**237**	**207**	**144**	**2,388**
PER CENT									
I learnt to make better use of my time at work or during study	12	15	15	13	11	11	9	6	12
I learnt to work better with people	27	24	19	19	18	14	13	12	19
I learnt how to better collect or organise or use information	20	23	25	15	18	19	12	15	19
I became better at running a household (eg. budgeting, organising household tasks)	11	9	4	4	5	6	3	1	6
I improved my language or communication skills	36	26	19	24	15	23	20	15	22
I learnt to do better at maths/numeracy	7	5	2	4	4	2	1	1	4
I was able to use technology better	12	15	13	10	14	16	14	10	13
I improved my decision making and thinking skills	21	22	20	24	20	19	8	6	18
Other skills	18	23	30	25	34	33	42	49	30
Course did not help improve my skills	6	7	9	5	9	7	6	10	7
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) Components may not add to total as more than one skill may have been gained. (b) Figures for "other certificate" should be treated with some caution. This category may include people who did courses that were not accredited post-school qualifications, or people who completed a secondary school qualification, eg. leaving certificate but who ticked this category in error. (c) Includes associate diplomas, undergraduate diplomas, technicians certificates and advanced certificates. (d) Includes persons for whom highest educational qualification was not stated.

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TABLE A2. IMPROVEMENT IN SKILLS RESULTING FROM 1992 COURSE BY LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME(a)

Improvement in skills(b)	*English language only*	*Selected European language*	*Selected Asian language*	*Other language*	*Total(c)*
		NUMBER			
I learnt to make better use of my time at work or during study	237	18	6	20	291
I learnt to work better with people	373	31	15	27	459
I learnt how to better collect or organise or use information	382	28	14	22	465
I became better at running a household (eg. budgeting, organising household tasks)	113	12	6	7	142
I improved my language or communication skills	327	63	54	72	529
I learnt to do better at maths/numeracy	58	11	4	7	85
I was able to use technology better	270	15	3	9	311
I improved my decision making and thinking skills	369	30	7	20	441
Other skills	636	25	3	30	710
Course did not help improve my skills	153	12	3	8	176
Total employed at 1992	**1,957**	**136**	**66**	**134**	**2,388**
		PER CENT			
I learnt to make better use of my time at work or during study	12	13	9	15	12
I learnt to work better with people	19	23	23	20	19
I learnt how to better collect or organise or use information	20	21	21	16	19
I became better at running a household (eg. budgeting, organising household tasks)	6	9	9	5	6
I improved my language or communication skills	17	46	82	54	22
I learnt to do better at maths/numeracy	3	8	6	5	4
I was able to use technology better	14	11	5	7	13
I improved my decision making and thinking skills	19	22	11	15	18
Other skills	32	18	5	22	30
Course did not help improve my skills	8	9	5	6	7
Total employed at 1992	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) Selected European language includes Italian, Greek, German, Spanish and Macedonian languages. Selected Asian language includes Vietnamese and Chinese languages. (b) Components may not add to total as more than one skill may have been gained. (c) Includes persons for whom languages other than English spoken at home was not stated. More than one language may have been spoken at home.

TABLE A3. IMPROVEMENT IN SKILLS RESULTING FROM 1992 COURSE BY RELATIONSHIP IN HOUSEHOLD

Improvement in skills(a)	*Lives alone*	*Parent in a two parent family household*	*Sole parent*	*Lives with partner but no children*	*Other*	*Total(d)*
			Number			
I learnt to make better use of my time at work or during study	29	113	30	65	49	291
I learnt to work better with people	61	173	46	101	64	459
I learnt how to better collect or organise or use information	55	184	42	110	62	465
I became better at running a household (eg. budgeting, organising household tasks)	11	69	17	22	20	142
I improved my language or communication skills	67	167	52	146	85	529
I learnt to do better at maths/numeracy	5	36	8	9	21	85
I was able to use technology better	24	156	22	67	38	311
I improved my decision making and thinking skills	42	183	43	107	58	441
Other skills	63	320	31	203	83	710
Course did not help improve my skills	23	72	15	46	18	176
Total	**272**	**925**	**176**	**688**	**265**	**2,388**
			Per cent			
I learnt to make better use of my time at work or during study	11	12	17	9	18	12
I learnt to work better with people	22	19	26	15	24	19
I learnt how to better collect or organise or use information	20	20	24	16	23	19
I became better at running a household (eg. budgeting, organising household tasks)	4	7	10	3	8	6
I improved my language or communication skills	25	18	30	21	32	22
I learnt to do better at maths/numeracy	2	4	5	1	8	4
I was able to use technology better	9	17	13	10	14	13
I improved my decision making and thinking skills	15	20	24	16	22	18
Other skills	23	35	18	30	31	30
Course did not help improve my skills	8	8	9	7	7	7
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) Components may not add to total as more than one skill may have been gained. (b) Includes persons for whom relationship in household was not stated.

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TABLE A4. TYPE OF COURSE BY NUMBER OF KEY COMPETENCIES IMPROVED BY LABOUR FORCE STATUS AT TIME OF 1992 COURSE

Number of key competencies improved(a)	*Employed*		*Unemployed (looking for work)*		*Not employed and not seeking employment*		*Total(b)*	
	Number	*Per cent*	*Number*	*Per cent*	*Number*	*Per cent*	*Number*	*Per cent*
				Adult basic education				
None	7	12	1	4	7	11	16	11
One — two	34	60	13	52	33	52	81	54
Three or more	16	28	11	44	24	38	53	35
Total	**57**	**100**	**25**	**100**	**64**	**100**	**150**	**100**
				ESL				
None	1	6	2	6	4	6	7	6
One — two	9	50	25	76	47	75	83	71
Three or more	8	44	6	18	12	19	27	23
Total	**18**	**100**	**33**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**117**	**100**
				Access				
None	27	19	3	14	21	18	51	18
One — two	80	56	10	45	69	59	162	57
Three or more	36	25	9	41	26	22	71	25
Total	**143**	**100**	**22**	**100**	**116**	**100**	**284**	**100**
				Vocational education				
None	50	19	15	19	24	25	90	20
One — two	174	64	52	66	60	62	289	64
Three or more	46	17	12	15	13	13	71	16
Total	**270**	**100**	**79**	**100**	**97**	**100**	**450**	**100**
				General adult education				
None	414	68	28	50	346	55	805	61
One — two	167	27	15	27	213	34	399	30
Three or more	29	5	13	23	65	10	110	8
Total	**610**	**100**	**56**	**100**	**624**	**100**	**1,314**	**100**
				TOTAL				
None	507	45	49	22	415	41	995	42
One — two	474	42	122	54	438	44	1,047	44
Three or more	138	12	54	24	148	15	346	14
Total	**1,119**	**100**	**225**	**100**	**1,001**	**100**	**2,388**	**100**

(a) Key competency skills are categories (a) - (h) in question 10. The "other skills" category is not included. This category may or may not have included key competency skills. High proportions of General Adult Education students reported they learnt "other skills". (b) Includes persons for whom labour force status at time of 1992 course was not stated.

TABLE A5. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES BY SEX

	Number			*Per cent*		
Educational outcomes(a)	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons(b)*	*Males*	*Females*	*Total(b)*
Prepared for another adult/community education course	107	357	473	23	19	20
Prepared for study at a university, TAFE , college or other tertiary institution	39	172	212	8	9	9
Assisted with studies I was doing at the time	68	196	266	15	10	11
Total	**468**	**1,875**	**2,388**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) People may have had more than one education outcome. (b) Includes persons for whom sex was not stated.

TABLE A6. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES BY AGE GROUP (YEARS)

Educational outcomes(a)	*15-24*	*25-34*	*35-44*	*45-54*	*55-64*	*65+*	*Total(c)*
				NUMBER			
Prepared for another adult/community education course	37	73	142	96	79	40	473
Prepared for study at a university, TAFE, college or other tertiary institution	40	41	69	32	19	10	212
Assisted with studies I was doing at the time	39	36	78	49	34	28	266
Total	**164**	**399**	**611**	**519**	**366**	**293**	**2,388**
				PER CENT			
Prepared for another adult/community education course	23	18	23	18	22	14	20
Prepared for study at a university, TAFE, college or other tertiary institution	24	10	11	6	5	3	9
Assisted with studies I was doing at the time	24	9	13	9	9	10	11
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) People may have had more than one education outcome. (b) Includes persons for whom age was not stated.

TABLE A7. PERSONS WHO STARTED STUDYING TOWARDS A QUALIFICATION AFTER COMPLETING A 1992 ACE COURSE: TYPE OF HIGHEST QUALIFICATION STUDIED TOWARDS BY SEX

	Number			*Per cent*		
Type of highest qualification studied towards after 1992 course	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons(b)*	*Males*	*Females*	*Total(b)*
Year 10 or equivalent	2	9	12	4	3	3
Secondary school certificate	3	49	52	5	17	15
Trade certificate/ apprenticeship	5	6	11	9	2	3
Other certificate(b)	12	80	92	22	28	27
Diploma or equivalent(c)	9	45	54	16	16	16
Bachelor degree	10	44	55	18	15	16
Post graduate qualificiation	4	24	28	7	8	8
Other	10	33	43	18	11	12
Total	**55**	**290**	**347**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) Includes persons for whom sex was not stated. (b) Figures for ''other certificate'' should be treated with some caution. This category may include people who did courses that were not accredited post-school qualifications, or people who completed a secondary school qualification e.g. leaving certificate, but who ticked this category in error.

(c) Includes associate diplomas, undergraduate diplomas, technicians certificates and advanced certificates.

TABLE A8. PERSONS COMPLETING ACE COURSE AFTER 1992 : TYPES OF COURSES COMPLETED BY SEX

Types of courses completed since 1992(a)	*Number*			*Per cent*		
	Males	*Females*	*Persons(b)*	*Males*	*Females*	*Total(b)*
English as a second language	11	40	53	7	5	5
Reading and writing	16	48	68	10	6	7
Maths/numeracy	8	26	35	5	3	3
Courses to prepare you for returning to formal study	1	18	19	1	2	2
Adult VCE, HSC or SACE subjects	3	33	36	2	4	4
General study on topics of interest (eg. history, philosophy, social sciences)	24	97	123	15	11	12
Skills and crafts for general interest (eg. creative writing, knitting)	45	423	473	28	50	46
Skills and crafts for use in your job/preferred job	28	173	202	18	20	20
Courses to help you look for a job	16	78	95	10	9	9
Other	61	270	335	39	32	33
Total	**158**	**848**	**1,021**	**100**	**100**	**100**

VCE is the Victorian Certificate of Education. HSC is the Higher School Certificate. SACE is the South Australian Certificate of Education. (a) Components may not add to total as more than one course may have been completed since 1992. (b) Includes persons for whom sex was not stated.

TABLE A9. PERSONS COMPLETING ACE COURSES AFTER 1990: TO WHAT EXTENT FOUND COURSES HELPFUL BY SEX

	Number			*Per cent*		
To what extent found courses helpful	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons(a)*	*Males*	*Females*	*Total(a)*
Very helpful	147	823	984	70	82	80
Slightly helpful	57	163	222	27	16	18
Not sure if helpful	2	15	17	1	1	1
Not helpful at all	4	3	7	2	0	1
Total	**210**	**1,004**	**1,230**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) Includes persons for whom sex was not stated.

TABLE A10. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES BY SEX

	Number			*Per cent*		
Employment outcomes	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons*	*Males*	*Females*	*Total(b)*
Persons employed at time of 1992 course(a)						
Learnt skills to help with the job I was in	85	227	313	32	27	28
Learnt skills to help me find a better job than the one I was in or start my own business	40	120	161	15	14	14
Total employed at 1992	*268*	*843*	*1,119*	*100*	*100*	*100*
Persons unemployed at time of 1992 course						
Learnt skills to help me find a job or start my own business	30	74	107	42	50	48
Total unemployed at 1992	*71*	*149*	*225*	*100*	*100*	*100*
Persons not employed and not seeking employment at time of 1992 course						
Learnt skills to help me find a job or start my own business	12	82	95	10	10	9
Total not employed and not seeking employment at 1992	*123*	*857*	*1,001*	*100*	*100*	*100*

(a) Employed people may have had more than one employment outcome. (b) Includes persons for whom sex was not stated.

TABLE A11. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES BY AGE GROUP (YEARS)

Employment outcomes	*15-24*	*25-34*	*35-44*	*45-54*	*55-64*	*65+*	*Total(b)*
NUMBER							
Persons employed at time of 1992 course(a)							
Learnt skills to help with the job I was in	20	65	121	76	26	2	313
Learnt skills to help me find a better job than the one I was in or start my own business	23	40	51	33	12	1	161
Total employed at 1992	*78*	*247*	*350*	*296*	*113*	*25*	*1,119*
Persons unemployed at time of 1992 course							
Learnt skills to help me find a job or start my own business	23	18	30	29	6	0	107
Total unemployed at 1992	*39*	*38*	*58*	*68*	*16*	*4*	*225*
Persons not employed and not seeking employment at time of 1992 course							
Learnt skills to help me find a job or start my own business	8	16	41	17	10	3	95
Total not employed and not seeking employment at 1992	*46*	*113*	*199*	*152*	*231*	*249*	*1,001*
PER CENT							
Persons employed at time of 1992 course(a)							
Learnt skills to help with the job I was in	26	26	35	26	23	8	28
Learnt skills to help me find a better job than the one I was in or start my own business	29	16	15	11	11	4	14
Total employed at 1992	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*
Persons unemployed at time of 1992 course							
Learnt skills to help me find a job or start my own business	59	47	52	43	38	0	48
Total unemployed at 1992	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*
Persons not employed and not seeking employment at time of 1992 course							
Learnt skills to help me find a job or start my own business	17	14	21	11	4	1	9
Total not employed and not seeking employment at 1992	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*

(a) Employed people may have had more than one employment outcome. (b) Includes persons for whom age was not stated.

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TABLE A12. INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES BY SEX

	Number			*Per cent*		
Individual and social outcomes(a)	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons(b)*	*Males*	*Females*	*Total(b)*
Personal outcomes						
Helped me personally (eg. self confidence, learn to relax, motivate me, help me to make decisions)	268	1,217	1,504	57	65	63
Learnt about a topic, skill or craft I'm interested in	382	1,579	1,988	82	84	83
Met new people or people with the same interests	259	1,302	1,580	55	69	66
Helped me to deal with major changes to my life (eg. separation, death in family, having children, retirement)	78	374	458	17	20	19
Learnt a skill or craft which helped me make a bit of extra money	76	332	416	16	18	17
Family outcomes						
Helped me to become a better parent	53	297	355	11	16	15
Assisted me to care for disabled children or elderly/disabled relatives	18	87	107	4	5	4
Developed a skill or craft for use around the house	119	634	757	25	34	32
Helped me to get along better with my husband/wife partner	62	244	312	13	13	13
Helped me to assist my children with their schooling	58	199	263	12	11	11
Community outcomes						
Became involved/more involved with voluntary work or community activities	51	305	364	11	16	15
Became more aware of services and information available in the community	151	717	886	32	38	37
Language, literacy and numeracy outcomes						
Helped me to speak English better where English is not my first language	53	124	181	11	7	8
Improved my speaking, reading writing or mathematical skills	137	397	545	29	21	23
Total	**468**	**1,875**	**2,388**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) People may have had more than one outcome. (b) Includes persons for whom sex was not stated.

TABLE A13. INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES BY AGE GROUP (YEARS)

Individual and social outcomes(a)	*15-24*	*25-34*	*35-44*	*45-54*	*55-64*	*65+*	*Total(b)*
NUMBER							
Personal outcomes							
Helped me personally (eg. self confidence, learn to relax, motivate me, help me to make decisions)	95	250	417	326	237	159	1,504
Learnt about a topic, skill or craft I'm interested in	133	349	519	428	311	227	1,988
Met new people or people with the same interests	98	273	386	324	270	210	1,580
Helped me to deal with major changes to my life (eg. separation, death in family, having children, retirement)	11	63	106	86	100	88	458
Learnt a skill or craft which helped me make a bit of extra money	29	86	132	87	50	25	416
Family outcomes							
Helped me to become a better parent	3	65	166	71	32	13	355
Assisted me to care for disabled children or elderly/disabled relatives	4	15	28	30	22	6	107
Developed a skill or craft for use around the house	44	166	215	154	121	51	757
Helped me to get along better with my husband/wife partner	12	53	104	58	59	23	312
Helped me to assist my children with their schooling	5	37	133	57	15	9	263
Community outcomes							
Became involved/more involved with voluntary work or community activities	22	53	109	68	69	40	364
Became more aware of services and information available in the community	53	142	232	167	174	105	886
Language, literacy and numeracy outcomes							
Helped me to speak English better where English is not my first language	6	18	41	53	35	27	181
Improved my speaking, reading writing or mathematical skills	51	74	130	125	78	77	545
Total	**164**	**399**	**611**	**519**	**366**	**293**	**2,388**
PER CENT							
Personal outcomes							
Helped me personally (eg. self confidence, learn to relax, motivate me, help me to make decisions)	58	63	68	63	65	54	63
Learnt about a topic, skill or craft I'm interested in	81	87	85	82	85	77	83
Met new people or people with the same interests	60	68	63	62	74	72	66

TABLE A13. INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES BY AGE GROUP (YEARS) —*continued*

Individual and social outcomes(a)	*15-24*	*25-34*	*35-44*	*45-54*	*55-64*	*65+*	*Total(b)*
				PER CENT			
Helped me to deal with major changes to my life (eg. separation, death in family, having children, retirement)	7	16	17	17	27	30	19
Learnt a skill or craft which helped me make a bit of extra money	18	22	22	17	14	9	17
Family outcomes							
Helped me to become a better parent	2	16	27	14	9	4	15
Assisted me to care for disabled children or elderly/disabled relatives	2	4	5	6	6	2	4
Developed a skill or craft for use around the house	27	42	35	30	33	17	32
Helped me to get along better with my husband/wife partner	7	13	17	11	16	8	13
Helped me to assist my children with their schooling	3	9	22	11	4	3	11
Community outcomes							
Became involved/more involved with voluntary work or community activities	13	13	18	13	19	14	15
Became more aware of services and information available in the community	32	36	38	32	48	36	37
Language, literacy and numeracy outcomes							
Helped me to speak English better where English is not my first language	4	5	7	10	10	9	8
Improved my speaking, reading writing or mathematical skills	31	19	21	24	21	26	23
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) People may have had more than one outcome. (b) Includes persons for whom age was not stated.

TABLE A14. PERSONS WHO REPORTED DIFFICULTIES MEETING THEIR EXPECTATIONS OF THE 1992 COURSE : TYPES OF DIFFICULTIES MEETING EXPECTATIONS BY SEX

	Number			*Per cent*		
Types of difficulties(a)	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons(b)*	*Males*	*Females*	*Total(b)*
I did not have enough schooling or skills to do what I hoped to do	29	44	74	30	15	18
I had trouble speaking or writing English	19	33	52	19	11	13
There were no jobs/no suitable jobs available	16	23	40	16	8	10
I was hoping to do another course but could not afford it	13	43	56	13	15	14
I was hoping to do more study but the course was full/ not offered to me	12	27	40	12	9	10
I did not feel confident to do what I wanted	10	45	56	10	15	14
My own ill health or disability	14	37	53	14	13	13
I needed to look after children	2	42	45	2	14	11
I needed to look after other family members	5	31	36	5	11	9
My work commitments gave me no time	14	59	76	14	20	19
Other reason	38	109	148	39	37	37
Total	**98**	**295**	**402**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) Components may not add to total as more than one difficulty may have been reported. (b) Includes persons for whom sex was not stated. Does not include persons who did not state the type of difficulty they experienced.

TABLE A15. INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT EXPECTATIONS BY SEX

	Number			*Per cent*		
Expectations(a)	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons(b)*	*Males*	*Females*	*Total(b)*
Personal expectations						
Help me personally	170	932	1,124	36	50	47
Learning about a topic, skill or craft I'm interested in	364	1,487	1,884	78	79	79
Meeting new people or people with the same interests	177	959	1,158	38	51	48
Helping me to deal with major changes to my life	68	325	400	15	17	17
To learn a skill or craft for a bit of extra money	96	326	431	21	17	18
Family expectations						
Helping me to become a better parent	37	223	265	8	12	11
Assisting me to care for disabled children or elderly/disabled relatives	14	54	70	3	3	3
Developing a skill or craft for use around the house	128	609	749	27	32	31
Helping me to get along better with my husband/wife/partner	49	168	222	10	9	9
Help me to assist my children with their schooling	53	155	213	11	8	9
Community expectations						
Getting involved/more involved with voluntary work or community activities	50	286	344	11	15	14
Becoming more aware of services and information available in the community	108	591	714	23	32	30
Language, literacy and numeracy expectations						
Helping me to speak English better where English is not my first language	44	131	180	9	7	8
Improving my speaking, reading, writing or mathematical skills	125	371	509	27	20	21
Education expectations						
Preparing for another adult/community education course	82	264	352	18	14	15
Preparing for study at a university, TAFE college or other tertiary institution	31	140	174	7	7	7
Assisting with studies I was doing at the time	58	154	216	12	8	9
Employment expectations						
Learning skills to help with the job I was in	88	218	307	19	12	13
Learning skills to help me find a job, find a better job or start my own business	107	324	435	23	17	18
Total	**468**	**1,875**	**2,388**	**100**	**100**	**100**

(a) People may have had more than one expectation. (b) Includes persons for whom sex was not stated.

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APPENDIX ONE

LIST OF CENTRES WHICH PARTICIPATED IN THE MAIL OUT SURVEY

NSW ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION SAMPLE

A. METROPOLITAN CENTRES

Small centres

South West Education and Leisure Learning Foundation
Riverwood Community Centre
Waverley-Woollahra Arts Centre
North Balgowlah Community Centre
Christian Community Aid Service
Sutherland Shire Adult Leisure Learning Centre
Rockdale Adult Leisure Learning Centre
Kogarah Adult Learning and Leisure Centre

Medium centres

Wesley Central Mission - Sydney School for Seniors
Bankstown Evening College
Blacktown District Community College
Manly/Warringah Community College
Hawkesbury Community College
Baulkham Hills Leisure Learning Centre

Large centres

WEA Sydney
Macarthur Community College
Parramatta Evening College
St George & Sutherland Regional Evening College
Hills District Evening College
Chatswood Evening College

B. NON-METROPOLITAN CENTRES

Small centres

Young Community Learning Centre
Bourke Adult Learning Co-operative

Guyra Adult Learning Association
Wallabadah Adult Learning Association

Medium centres

Gravesend Adult Learning Association
New School of Arts Neighbourhood House
Southern Region Community College
Singleton Leisure Learning Group
Barraba Community Learning Association

Large centres

Tamworth Adult Education Centre
Hunter Community College
WEA Central Coast Community College
Central West Community College

VICTORIAN ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION SAMPLE

A. METROPOLITAN CENTRES

Small centres

SPELD
Collingwood Neighbourhood House
SPAN Community House
Holden St Neighbourhood House
Heathdale Community Centre
Greenhills Neighbourhood Centre
North Melbourne and ESL Literacy Network Collective
Wavlink

Medium centres

Footscray Community Arts Centre
Brunswick Community Education Project
Phillip Island Community Centre
Werribee Community Centre
Keysborough Learning & Drop-In Centre
Waverley Learning Centre
Essendon Community Group
Morrison House

Large centres

Council of Adult Education
Glenroy Adult Literacy Group & Community Learning Centre
Craigieburn Further Education Centre
Sandybeach Community Co-op Society
Diamond Valley Learning Centre
Diamond Creek Living & Learning Centre
Eltham Living & Learning Centre

B. NON-METROPOLITAN CENTRES

Small centres

Cobram Community House
Maldon Neighbourhood Centre
Winchelsea Community House
Queenscliff Neighbourhood House
Benalla Forum

Medium centres

SCOPE: La Trobe Valley Community Education Association
Wangaratta Centre for Continuing Education
Kyabram Community Centre
Ocean Grove Neighbourhood Centre

Large centres

Albury-Wodonga Continuing Education Centre
Ballarat Adult & Further Education Centre
Hamilton Adult & Continuing Education Centre

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION SAMPLE

A. METROPOLITAN CENTRES

Small centres

Taperoo Community Centre
Vietnamese Community in Australia
Chinese Welfare Services
Ingle Farm Women's Communication Group

Women's Community Centre (SA)
Wynn Vale Community House
Aberfoyle Park

Medium centres

Midway Community House
Salisbury North Neighbourhood House
Bowden Brompton Community Centre
Burton Park Community House
YWCA Elizabeth Community House
North East Neighbourhood House
Perriam Community Centre
Paddocks Neighbourhood House
Beachside Community Centre

Large centres

Glandore Community Centre
Clarence Park Community Centre
Grange Community Centre Inc
Fullarton Park Community Centre
Goodwood Community Centre
Pooraka Neighbourhood House
WEA
Junction Community Centre
Woodcroft Neighbourhood Centre

B. NON-METROPOLITAN CENTRES

Small centres

Tailem Bend Community House
Bordertown Uniting Church
Rural Family Centre
Community Access Centre
Peterborough Community Centre

Medium centres

Sisters of St Joseph

APPENDIX TWO

LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS EXPLAINING THE NEED FOR THE SURVEY

WE NEED YOUR HELP

SURVEY ON ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Dear student/former student,

As providers of adult and community education, we are interested in finding out what type of person does our courses and why people choose to do courses with us. We are also interested in whether your expectations were met from doing the course. By knowing this, we will be in a better position to plan future courses. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has been comissioned to do this survey.

To find this information, the Adult Community Education Unit has asked the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to conduct a survey on the course you did at our centre in 1992. This course is written on the front of the questionnaire provided.

Could you please help us by completing the questionnaire and mailing it in the reply paid envelope provided within 5 days of receiving it. Your opinions will be treated with complete confidentiality. There is no need to supply your name or address, but this would be greatly appreciated because it is very important that we and the ABS find out if you found some questions hard to understand.

If you have any queries about the questionnaire, please contact Carolyn Rooke toll free on 008 032 156. Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Name
Title
Name of centre
Date

APPENDIX THREE

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Centre no.
(office use only)
☐☐☐☐

ADULT/COMMUNITY EDUCATION: OUTCOMES AND PATHWAYS QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING BEFORE BEGINNING:

This questionnaire is in five parts:

- *Part A asks about the adult/community education course you completed in 1992, which is listed below, and other adult/community education courses you have completed.*
- *Part B looks at whether you were employed or not at the time of the 1992 course.*
- *Part C asks you for details of your educational background.*
- *Part D asks whether you are currently employed or not.*
- *Part E asks you for some information about yourself, for example your age and your sex.*

PLEASE READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY, AND MAKE SURE THAT YOU GO TO THE APPROPRIATE QUESTION WHEN DIRECTED

The 1992 course we wish to obtain details on is:

1 How many classes of the 1992 course listed above did you attend?

All classes .... ☐ 1 → *Go to next page*

At least three quarters of all classes .... ☐ 2 → *Go to next page*

Less than three quarters of all classes .... ☐ 3 → ***No further questions: return in envelope provided***

PART A. ADULT/COMMUNITY EDUCATION COURSES YOU HAVE COMPLETED

ADULT/COMMUNITY EDUCATION COURSE COMPLETED IN 1992

2 **BEFORE you started the 1992 course, how did you EXPECT that the course would help you in relation to personal, family and community life?**
(Please tick as many as appropriate)

PERSONAL

(a) Help me personally (eg. self confidence, learn to relax, motivate me, help me to make decisions) ☐ 01

(b) Learning about a topic, skill or craft I'm interested in ☐ 02

(c) Meeting new people or people with the same interests ☐ 03

(d) Helping me to deal with major changes to my life (eg. separation, death of a friend or family member, having children, retirement) ☐ 04

(e) To learn a skill or craft to help me make a bit of extra money ☐ 05

FAMILY

(f) Helping me to become a better parent ☐ 06

(g) Assisting me to care for disabled children or elderly/disabled relatives ☐ 07

(h) Developing a skill or craft for use around the house (eg. sewing, plumbing, car repairs) ☐ 08

(i) Helping me to get along better with my husband/wife/partner ☐ 09

(j) Help me to assist my children with their schooling ☐ 10

COMMUNITY

(k) Getting involved/more involved with voluntary work or community activities (eg. helping at school canteen, meals on wheels, community action groups) ☐ 11

(l) Becoming more aware of services and information available in the community ☐ 12

3 **BEFORE you started the 1992 course, how did you EXPECT that the course would help you in relation to language/communication, employment and education outcomes?**
(Please tick as many as appropriate)

LANGUAGE/COMMUNICATION

(a) Helping me to speak English better where English is not my first language .... ☐1

(b) Improving my speaking, reading, writing or mathematical skills .... ☐2

EDUCATION

(c) Preparing for another adult/community education course .... ☐3

(d) Preparing for study at a university, TAFE college or other tertiary institution .... ☐4

(e) Assisting with studies I was doing at the time .... ☐5

EMPLOYMENT

(f) Learning skills to help with the job I was in .... ☐6

(g) Learning skills to help me find a better job than the one I was in .... ☐7

(h) Learning skills to help me find a job or start my own business .... ☐8

4 **Looking back at your responses to questions 2 and 3, in what area did you EXPECT that the 1992 course would help you the MOST?**
(Please tick ONE only)

Personal .... ☐1
Family .... ☐2
Community .... ☐3
Language/Communication .... ☐4
Education .... ☐5
Employment .... ☐6

5 **Looking back after you had completed the 1992 course, did anything make it difficult for you so that you didn't fully meet your EXPECTATIONS?**

Yes .... ☐ 1

No .... ☐ 2 → *Go to Q.7*

6 **Since completing the course, what made it difficult for you to fully meet your EXPECTATIONS? (eg. if you didn't develop the confidence you wanted, why not? If you didn't get into the course you wanted, why not?)**
(Please tick as many as appropriate)

(a) I did not have enough schooling or skills to do what I hoped to do .... ☐ 01

(b) I had trouble speaking or writing English .... ☐ 02

(c) There were no jobs/no suitable jobs available .... ☐ 03

(d) I was hoping to do another course but could not afford it .... ☐ 04

(e) I was hoping to do more study but the course was full/not offered to me .... ☐ 05

(f) I did not feel confident to do what I wanted (eg. get a job, do more study etc.) .... ☐ 06

(g) My own ill health or disability .... ☐ 07

(h) I needed to look after children .... ☐ 08

(i) I needed to look after other family members .... ☐ 09

(j) My work commitments gave me no time .... ☐ 10

(k) Other reason (please specify) .... ☐ 11

7 **How did the 1992 course HELP you in relation to personal, family and community life?**
(For EACH category below, from (a) to (l), tick ONE box)

	Yes, helped me a lot	**Yes, helped me a little**	**Uncertain as to whether helped me or not**	**No, did not help me or not applicable to me**
(a) Helped me personally (eg. self confidence, learn to relax, motivate me, help me to make decisions)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(b) Learnt about a topic, skill or craft I'm interested in	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(c) Met new people or people with the same interests	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(d) Helped me to deal with major changes to my life (eg. separation, death of a friend or family member, having children, retirement)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(e) Learnt a skill or craft which helped me make a bit of extra money	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(f) Helped me to become a better parent	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(g) Assisted me to care for disabled children or elderly/disabled relatives	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(h) Developed a skill or craft for use around the house (eg. sewing, plumbing, car repairs)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(i) Helped me to get along better with my husband/wife/partner	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(j) Helped me to assist my children with their schooling	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(k) Became involved/more involved with voluntary work or community activities (eg. helping at school canteen, meals on wheels, community action groups)	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(l) Became more aware of services and information available in the community	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

8 **How did the 1992** course HELP you in relation to language/communication, employment and **education outcomes?**
(For EACH category below, from (a) to (h), tick ONE box)

	Yes, helped me a lot	Yes, helped me a little	Uncertain as to whether helped me or not	No, did not help me or not applicable to me
(a) Helped me to speak English better where English is not my first language	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
(b) Improved my speaking, reading, writing or mathematical skills	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
(c) Prepared for another adult/community education course	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
(d) Prepared for study at a university, TAFE college or other tertiary institution	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
(e) Assisted with studies I was doing at the time	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
(f) Learnt skills to help me with the job I was in	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
(g) Learnt skills to help me find a better job than the one I was in	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
(h) Learnt skills to help me find a job or start my own business	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4

9 (a) Did the 1992 course help you in ways that you have not mentioned yet?

Yes (please specify below) ☐1

No ☐2

(b) IF YES, HOW DID THE 1992 COURSE HELP YOU IN WAYS YOU HAVE NOT YET MENTIONED? *(Please specify)*

☐☐ Office use only

10 In which of the following areas, if any, did the 1992 course improve your skills? *(Please tick at least one)*

(a) I learnt to make better use of my time at work or during study ☐01

(b) I learnt to work better with people ☐02

(c) I learnt how to better collect or organise or use information ☐03

(d) I became better at running a household (eg. budgeting, organising household tasks) ☐04

(e) I improved my language or communication skills (eg. speaking, reading, listening, writing) ☐05

(f) I learnt to do better at maths/numeracy ☐06

(g) I was able to use technology better (eg. computers, typewriters) ☐07

(h) I improved my decision making and thinking skills ☐08

(i) Course did not help improve my skills ☐09

(j) I learnt other skills (please specify) ☐10

OTHER ADULT/COMMUNITY EDUCATION COURSES YOU HAVE COMPLETED

PLEASE READ THE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW BEFORE GIVING YOUR RESPONSES

NOTE:

- *For the questions below, adult/community education means education not part of the regular school, university and TAFE system.*
- *Some examples of adult/community education courses include art and craft, languages, computing, business skills, self development and secondary school certificate subjects (eg. VCE, HSC or SACE)*

11 SINCE 1990, have you done any adult/community education courses other than the one listed on the front of the form? (INCLUDING ANY YOU ARE CURRENTLY DOING)

Yes.. ☐ 1
No .... ☐ 2 → *Go to Q.15*

12 How many adult/community education courses have you done SINCE COMPLETING the 1992 course? (INCLUDING ANY YOU ARE CURRENTLY DOING)

None .... ☐ 1 → *Go to Q.14*
1-2 .... ☐ 2
3-4 .... ☐ 3
More than 4 .... ☐ 4

13 **What TYPES of courses have you done since the 1992 course? (INCLUDING ANY YOU ARE CURRENTLY DOING)**
(Please tick as many as appropriate)

(a) English as a second language (for migrants) .... ☐01

(b) Reading and writing (not creative writing) .... ☐02

(c) Maths/numeracy .... ☐03

(d) Courses to prepare you for returning to formal study (eg. preparation for adult VCE, HSC or SACE) .... ☐04

(e) Adult VCE, HSC or SACE subjects .... ☐05

(f) General study on topics of interest (eg. history, philosophy, social sciences) .... ☐06

(g) Skills and crafts for general interest (eg. creative writing, knitting) .... ☐07

(h) Skills and crafts for use in your job/preferred job .... ☐08

(i) Courses to help you look for a job .... ☐09

(j) Other (please specify) .... ☐10

....

....

14 **Apart from the 1992 course listed on the front of the form, how helpful GENERALLY have you found the courses you have done since 1990?**

Very helpful .... ☐1

Slightly helpful .... ☐2

Not sure if helpful .... ☐3

Not helpful at all .... ☐4

PART B. EMPLOYMENT SITUATION AT TIME OF 1992 COURSE

Please answer in relation to the course listed on the first page of the questionnaire

15 When you began the 1992 course, were you:

Employed full-time ☐1 → *Go to Q.16*

Employed part-time ☐2 → *Go to Q.16*

Unemployed; ie. looking for work ☐3 → *Go to Q.19*

Not employed and not seeking employment ☐4 → *Go to Q.18*

16 When you started the 1992 course, to which occupation category did you belong?
(If you had more than one job, please answer for your MAIN job only)

Plant and machine operators, drivers and labourers ☐1

Salespersons and Personal Service Workers (eg. child care workers, enrolled nurses and travel stewards) ☐2

Clerks ☐3

Tradespersons ☐4

Para-professionals (eg. registered nurses, child care co-ordinators, police and technicians) ☐5

Professionals (eg. teachers, social workers, engineers, doctors) ☐6

Managers ☐7

Other (please specify) ☐8

....

....

....

17 IF YOU ANSWERED QUESTION 16, NOW GO TO QUESTION 22

18 What were all the reasons you weren't looking for paid work at the time of the 1992 course?
(Please tick as many as appropriate)

(a) My own ill health or disability ☐01
(b) I was studying/returning to study ☐02
(c) I needed to look after children ☐03
(d) I needed to look after other family members ☐04
(e) I did not have enough schooling/training ☐05
(f) I had trouble speaking or writing English ☐06
(g) I did not feel confident to get a job ☐07
(h) There were no jobs/no suitable jobs available ☐08
(i) I was involved in voluntary work ☐09
(j) I had retired ☐10
(k) I preferred not to work at the time ☐11
(l) Other reason (please specify) ☐12

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19 When you began the 1992 course, how long ago was it since you last worked (full-time or part-time) for 2 weeks or more?

Less than 1 year ☐1
1 year - less than 2 years ☐2
2 years - less than 3 years ☐3
3 years - less than 5 years ☐4
5 years or more ☐5
Have never worked ☐6 → *Go to Q.22*

20 To what occupation category did you belong in that job?
(If you had more than one job, please answer for your MAIN job only)

Plant and machine operators, drivers and labourers ☐1
Salespersons and Personal Service Workers (eg. child care workers, enrolled nurses and travel stewards) ☐2
Clerks ☐3
Tradespersons ☐4
Para-professionals (eg. registered nurses, child care co-ordinators, police and technicians) ☐5
Professionals (eg. teachers, social workers, engineers, doctors) ☐6
Managers ☐7
Other (please specify) ☐8

....

....

....

21 **SINCE you began the 1992 course, at any stage have you worked (full-time or part-time) for a period of 2 weeks or more?**

Yes ☐ 1

No ☐ 2

PART C. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

22 **Which of the following best describes the educational qualifications you have COMPLETED?**
(Please tick as many as appropriate)

(a) Year 10 ☐ 01

(b) Secondary school certificate (eg. VCE, HSC, SACE) ☐ 02

(c) Trade certificate/ Apprenticeship ☐ 03

(d) Technician's certificate/ Advanced certificate ☐ 04

(e) Certificate other than above ☐ 05

(f) Associate diploma ☐ 06

(g) Undergraduate diploma ☐ 07

(h) Bachelor degree ☐ 08

(i) Postgraduate diploma ☐ 09

(j) Master's degree/doctorate ☐ 10

(k) None of the above ☐ 11

23 **(a) Did you start STUDYING TOWARDS any qualification(s) AFTER completing the 1992 adult/community education course?**

Yes (please specify below) ☐ 1

No ☐ 2

(b) IF YES, WHAT WERE THESE QUALIFICATIONS?
(Please tick as many as appropriate)

(i) Year 10 or equivalent (eg. Certificate of General Education, Victoria) ☐ 01

(ii) Secondary school certificate (eg. VCE, HSC, SACE) ☐ 02

(iii) Trade certificate/ Apprenticeship ☐ 03

(iv) Technician's certificate/ Advanced certificate ☐ 04

(v) Certificate other than above ☐ 05

(vi) Associate diploma ☐ 06

(vii) Undergraduate diploma ☐ 07

(viii) Bachelor degree ☐ 08

(ix) Postgraduate diploma ☐ 09

(x) Master's degree/doctorate ☐ 10

(xi) Other (please specify) ☐ 11

PART D. CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

24 Are you CURRENTLY:

Employed full-time	☐1	→ *Go to Q.25*
Employed part-time	☐2	→ *Go to Q.25*
Unemployed: ie. looking for work	☐3	→ *Go to Q.26*
Not employed and not seeking employment	☐4	→ *Go to Q.26*

25 **To which occupation category do you CURRENTLY belong? (If you have more than one job, please answer for your MAIN job only)**

Plant and machine operators, drivers and labourers	☐1
Salespersons and Personal Service Workers (eg. child care workers, enrolled nurses and travel stewards)	☐2
Clerks	☐3
Tradespersons	☐4
Para-professionals (eg. registered nurses, child care co-ordinators, police and technicians)	☐5
Professionals (eg. teachers, social workers, engineers, doctors)	☐6
Managers	☐7
Other (please specify)	☐8

PART E. ABOUT YOU, THE STUDENT

26 Sex:

Male	☐1
Female	☐2

27 Your age:

15-19 years	☐01
20-24 years	☐02
25-29 years	☐03
30-34 years	☐04
35-39 years	☐05
40-44 years	☐06
45-49 years	☐07
50-54 years	☐08
55-59 years	☐09
60-64 years	☐10
65 years or over	☐11

28 Do you:

(a) live alone	☐01

OR (b) live with any of the following: *(Please tick as many as appropriate):*

Children of your own (includes foster children, adopted children and children of your partner):

(i) aged less than 5 years	☐02
(ii) aged between 5-14 years	☐03
(iii) aged between 15-24 years and studying full-time	☐04
(iv) aged between 15-24 years and NOT studying full-time	☐05
(v) Your de facto/partner	☐06
(vi) Your husband/wife	☐07
(vii) One or both parents of your partner/spouse (or your previous partner/spouse)	☐08
(viii) Both of your parents	☐09
(ix) One of your parents	☐10
(x) Other relative(s)	☐11
(xi) Non-relative(s)	☐12

29 Do you have responsibility for the care of a disabled child or an elderly/disabled relative?

Yes	☐1
No	☐2

30 In what country were you born?

Australia	☐01	→ *Go to Q.32*
China	☐02	
Germany	☐03	
Greece	☐04	
Italy	☐05	
Netherlands	☐06	
New Zealand	☐07	
Poland	☐08	
United Kingdom or Ireland	☐09	
Vietnam	☐10	
Other (please specify)	☐11	

....

....

31 When did you first arrive in Australia?

Before 1971 ☐1
1971 to 1980 ☐2
1981 to 1985 ☐3
1986 to 1990 ☐4
1991 to 1994 ☐5

32 Do you speak a language other than English at home?

No, speak only English ☐01
Yes, Italian ☐02
Yes, Greek ☐03
Yes, Arabic ☐04
Yes, German ☐05
Yes, Vietnamese ☐06
Yes, Spanish ☐07
Yes, Chinese language ☐08
Yes, Macedonian ☐09
Yes, other language (please specify) ☐10

33 Are you an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Islander?

No ☐1
Yes, Aboriginal ☐2
Yes, Torres Strait Islander ☐3
Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ☐4

34 In what city/town or suburb do you live and what is the postcode?

City/Town/Suburb

Postcode

35 Do you have any final comments about the adult/community education courses you have completed or anything else covered in this questionnaire?

Yes (please specify below) ☐1
No ☐2

36 Would you be able to participate in a follow-up survey that will look at the outcomes and pathways of 1992 course participants in a few years time?

Yes ☐1
No ☐2

37 If you are able to participate, please write your name, address and phone number below so that we can contact you.

Name

Phone number

Address

APPENDIX FOUR

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR DISCUSSION GROUPS

1. Why did you enrol in the course?

EXPECTATIONS

2. When you first enrolled you would have had certain expectations of the course. What expectations of the course did you have in terms of where it would lead?

   Probes:

   What were your expectations in terms of developing personally?

   What were your expectations in terms of gaining a certain sort of job?

   Did you expect to continue studying once you finished?

   What skills did you hope or expect to gain?

   Did you have any expectations in terms of working with the community/doing voluntary work?

   Any other expectations?

OUTCOMES

3. Were these expectations met?
   other aspects you didn't anticipate?

Probes on outcomes 1:

4(a) Did you do another course?
What type? Where? Why?

4(b) Did you use the skills and knowledge to help you find a job or are you using them in your current job?

4(c) Has this class helped you personally and/or your life in the community?

OR

Probes on outcomes 2:

4. Did doing the course have an impact on any aspect of your life? For example:

    personal
    other study (get more details)
    career/vocational (from what to what)
    skills
    family
    community

5. Have your expectations changed?

APPENDIX FIVE

ACFEB DEFINITION OF TYPE OF COURSE

Adult and community education encompasses a broad range of programs. These programs are classified by the Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFEB) into the following groups:

- **Adult Literacy & Basic Education:** up to and including year 10 equivalent educational programs such as the Certificate of General Adult Education.
- **English as a Second Language (ESL):** programs primarily aimed at improving the English language skills of students of non-English speaking background (NESB).
- **Vocational Education:** employment and pre-employment courses.
- **Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE):** accredited Board of Studies courses.
- **General Access:** courses which prepare students for further study, training or employment, for example bridging courses and personal development courses.
- **General Adult Education:** recreational and leisure courses directed towards the encouragement and development of creativity, social and personal pursuits and skills which enable people to make more effective use of leisure time, including life skills courses aimed at improving students' self esteem or their relationship with others.

Source: Adult, Community and Further Education Board, 1993, *Annual Statistical Collection 1994 Guidelines*, p. 8.

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